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Parent and Educator Opinion in Alternative and Non-alternative Public Schools

by

© Francis Benjamin Elliott

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ABSTRACT

The research reported here is a comparison of public alternative and non-alternative education programs on the basis of educator(teacher and principal) and parent opinions. The data was gathered using questionnaire and interview techniques. The study was conducted in two Edmonton public schools, each of which contains alternative and non-alternative programs.

Because the questionnaire response rate was low and the sample was small to begin with, generalizations for the whole school population could not be extrapolated. However, a number of trends in responses were observed.

In both schools the study revealed parent and educator support for the affective aims of education. In both schools these affective aims were rated higher by parents and educators in the alternative program than by respondents in the non-alternative program. A difference was found between the affective qualities that parents desired the school to develop in their children and what they perceived the school actually developed. The discrepancy between this ideality and perceived reality was greatest in the non-alternative programs of both schools. The questionnaire revealed a generally lower and more moderate response rating of the affective items by the non-alternative parents.

The interviews revealed that most parents perceived the teacher to be the single most important factor in their child's education. They also indicated that the main reason

why parents were sending their children to an alternative public school was in reaction to a negative experience with a regular/non-alternative public school. Another reason given for choosing an alternative program was that its values more closely matched those held at home than did those of the non-alternative program. The main reason given for sending children to the non-alternative program was its location within the community.

Alternative school parents perceived their children to be receiving a more personal education than did regular school parents. This was described by alternative school parents as the main value of education. Learning basic skills was described by regular school parents as the main value of education.

An interesting trend emerged in comparing teacher ratings with parent ratings at the alternative schools. Although both groups responded similarily in their desire for the school to develop specific affective traits, parents showed a higher rating than the teachers in what they perceived the school was actually accomplishing in these areas,

Further study of these trends and case histories is recommended.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Alternative types of education have been in existence for a long time. Historically, private schools and parochial schools have been labelled "alternative" because they existed outside the general public school system. More recently, however, alternative schools have been incorporated within the public school system. During the past decade there has been a substantial increase in the number and variety of these alternative schools. In the United States, prior to 1969, 25 alternative schools were recorded (ICOPE,1975); by 1975, Barr(1975) estimated their number at 5000. Fantini(1976) described this trend as "the only major movement now occurring in public education".

Why is there a need for alternatives to the already existing educational system? Why do alternative schools exist? School reforms and reformers are not new to the education system. Alternative education has historically derived from the theories and practices of Socrates, Rousseau, Montessori, Piaget, Dewey, Kirpatric, Counts, Winnetka, Dalton, Newland and many others. What appears to be new about the current reform, however, is its concern with altering the entire system not merely the teacher's classroom techniques(Tracy, 1976). Furthermore, alternative schools as a change effort are significantly different from many other reform plans in that they are based on choice and, therefore, voluntary(Fantini,1976).

The spirit of innovation in education prevalent during the 1960's evolved into the alternative school movement of the 1970's. In the United States, the alternative school movement had two social roots: the civil rights movement and the counter-culture movement (Fantini, 1976). Barr(1975) cites the primary reasons for the rapid and continuous growth of alternatives as: increased publicity through numerous periodicals and books, professional awareness and endorsement, financial support from federal and local authorities, and new teacher education programs. In England, a concomitant movement against the traditional knowledge-centered education resulted in the founding of the child-centered British Primary Schools. So popular was this reform it was advocated that these schools be incorporated into the British public education system (Plowden Report, 1967).

Earlier attempts at reform, mainly curricular, had been made in the '50's but they failed primarily because they didn't envelop the entire system. "Without changing the ways in which schools operate or teachers teach, changing the curriculum alone does not have much effect." (Silberman, 1971)

During the 1960's, problems with the existing educational system were being recognized. Fantini(1976) notes that "the problems which were made salient by the increasing federal attention to the schools were with the learner, his family and background". During the 1970's, the focus of reform shifted from the learners to the schools themselves. Fantini(1976) continues, "a new public policy began to emerge; the education problem is not the fault of the learner, but of the institution".

According to the Plowden Report(1967), "all schools reflect the views of society, or some section of society, about the way children should be brought up, whether or not these views are consciously held or defined". If one of the functions of the educational system is to serve society (Dreeben, 1968; Silberman, 1971), then the existing educational system must be attempting to meet the needs of parents and educators in that society. If meeting a public demand is one of the rationales for the development of alternative schools then alternative school educational goals can be related to public opinion.

A 1979 Gallup poll listed the major problems confronting the public schools in the United States as:

- discipline
- student use of drugs
- poor curriculum/poor standards
- difficulty in getting good teachers
- crime and vandalism
- large schools/too many classes/overcrowding
- pupils' lack of interest/truancy
- parents' lack of interest and
- teachers' lack of interest.

McElhinney *et al*. (1976) lists the common characteristics of alternative schools as follows:

- pupils have more responsibility for their own conduct and learning
- pupil contacts with teachers are one-to-one or in small groups
- pupils have much parental support due to their parents' involvement in the alternative program
- programs include parents in meaningful ways and develop strong parental commitment to the program and
- teachers are involved in long irregular hours.

The present public education system has had many critics, not the least of which are the educators themselves. The Edmonton Public School Board(hereafter referred to as the EPSB) did a research assessment of professional staff needs in 1972. Some of the common concerns were:

- pupil-teacher ratios
- remedial programs
- integration of programs
- relevancy of curriculum
- staff utilization and
- school morale.

Parent and student needs were not assessed in this particular study.

Since 1972, a number of alternative schools have been developed within the Edmonton public school system. These include: Virginia Park Cromdale, Grandview, Crestwood, Old Scona, W.P.Wagner, Talmud Torah, Chimo, Parkallen(Waldorf), and Garneau(Caraway).

The presence of alternative programs in existing schools indicates that parents, teachers and administrators have conceived of alternative ways of educating children and have attempted to put these ideologies into practice. Where alternatives exist within the public school system, it indicates that the people within these educational systems recognize a need, not only in principle but in fact. Within these systems, alternatives exist because public school boards are attempting to meet diverse approaches to learning (Strembitski, 1974). This may be an attempt to redress Stansfield's analysis(1973) that "the Canadian school system is plainly out of synch with an ever increasing diverse society". The existence of alternative schools within the public school system indicates how such a system attempts to meet the various demands made upon it.

A brief answer to the initial question - Why do alternative schools exist? - has been presented. In Edmonton, an area that has not yet been adequately researched is the relationship between parent and educator opinion in alternative and non-alternative programs.

II. THE PROBLEM

No single socially acceptable public education system exists. The very development of alternative schools indicates that some segments of society view the larger existing system as inadequate and that they are petitioning for change and reform. Many people(70%) are satisfied with the rate and degree of reform in the existing system (Fantini, 1976). However, increasing numbers are suggesting that it is not sufficient to make slow and minor changes in classroom structure, instructional methods or curriculum design(Barr, 1975; Fantini, 1976). Indeed, some segments of society are advocating a total reform - encompassing immediate and drastic revision in all of these areas. By designating any school as alternative, the public is questioning certain aspects of the existing school system and rejecting portions of it in favour of alternative approaches. "Expanding the framework of public education to include a wide range of alternatives seems the most feasible way to effect reform in our existing school system." (Fantini, 1976)

An important distinction must be made between reformers and critics: "The reformer is one who grapples with political and social problems and seeks solutions" while the critic "remains aloof from the system and from any ultimate responsibility for its success or failure."(Ravitch, 1978) That is, a critic asks the question: What sorts of changes are needed in the present educational system? A reformer asks: How can these changes be put into effect?

Alternative schools are examples of reform to the existing education system. Change and reform in educational institutions do not occur without public demand.

One of the functions of the education system is also to maintain the *status quo* (Silberman, 1971). Both alternative and non-alternative schools attempt to provide the kind of education that parents and educators perceive as important for children, delivered in a fashion that they perceive as being satisfactory. Without first knowing what the public needs are regarding education and how well these needs are being met by the existing system, educators will neither be able to validly criticize nor commend the present system, nor will they be able to adequately implement reform where change is demanded.

An in depth comparison of the needs of parents and educators in both alternative and non-alternative public schools in Edmonton has not yet been done. This study attempts to describe the opinions of parents and educators regarding their views of education. First, it describes the results of the questionnaire responses as follows. The opinions of parents and educators of children in each of two public alternative schools in Edmonton are compared. These opinions are then compared to those of parents and educators of children in the non-alternative program in the same two schools. Then, the results from each school are compared with each other. Secondly, it describes the results of the interviews where individual parent responses are interpreted and quoted by the author.

A. Purpose of the Study

A 'needs assessment' is frequently used as a first step in identifying the areas of needed reform in a public school system(See Appendix 1: EPSB - 1980 Parent and Staff Questionnaire). Needs assessments are often used to elicit public opinion towards particular aspects of educational practice. Frequently they reflect the author's bias by determining only what the author wants to find out and by assessing only the needs that he has defined in his questionnaire.[1] The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the opinions of parents and educators of alternative public school children with the opinions of parents and educators of non-alternative public school children regarding education.

The two schools to be studied each house a regular or non-alternative component and an alternative component. The needs as determined by the questionnaire and through interviews can thus be compared within each school and between the two schools.

It is not the purpose of this study to validate parent or educator opinions, merely to record and describe them.

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[1] For the author's own perspective see Conclusion: B.Synthesis.

The study was directed by the following questions:

1. What are the perceived needs of parents and educators in each public school studied?
2. How does the alternative school approach to education meet the perceived needs of parents and educators of alternative school children?
3. To what degree does the regular/non-alternative school approach to education meet the perceived needs of parents and educators of non-alternative school children?
4. What are the differences and similarities between parent and educator opinions of educational practice and theory in the two programs?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the public school system as perceived by parents and educators in the non-alternative program and in the alternative program?

B. Need for the Study

Historically alternative schools have developed outside the public education system. Many of these were developed to meet specific needs preceived by parents as not being met by the existing public school system(i.e., religious instruction, language instruction, philosophies of learning and instruction). The call for alternatives indicates a desire for a different approach to education than what is being offered. The identification of these needs could provide insightful direction for future educational development.

A comparison of parent and educator opinion in non-alternative and alternative schools has not yet been undertaken in Edmonton. This study attempts to do this.

C. The Research Questions

1. What are the background histories of the Caraway and Waldorf programs? Briefly how and why were they established in Edmonton?
   In the opinions of the participants and within the limitations of this study:
2. What are the parent-perceived needs of children in these two public alternative schools?
3. What are the parent-perceived needs of children in these two regular/non-alternative public schools?
4. How do the perceived needs of the non-alternative school participants compare with the perceived needs of the alternative school participants?
5. How well are these perceived needs being met by each public school?
6. What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Edmonton Public School system?
7. Do alternative school parents and educators perceive the goals of education differently than do non-alternative school parents and educators?

D. Definitions

Alternative School

"The means of delivering educational services to a plurality of publics which provides accessible choice among a diversity of programs"(Strembitski, 1974).[2]

Public Alternative School

An alternative elementary or secondary school maintained by the local government authority. The public alternative schools included in this study are Waldorf in Parkallen and Caraway in Garneau.[3]

Attitude

An intervening variable occurring between a measurable stimulus and a response(Hovland and Rosenberg, 1960).

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[2] With school alternatives spanning the entire ideological and pedagogical spectrum, there is considerable problem in generalizing about them. By definition, each one is different. Most share the following common functions(Tracy, 1976):

- the schools provide an "option" for students, parents and teachers
- the alternative school is generally more committed and responsive to some specific educational need(s) in the community
- the alternative school has generally a more comprehensive set of goals and objectives; emphasis is placed on basic skills, cognitive and affective development, career development, inner directedness, and on improving the students' self-concept
- the alternative school is flexible and therefore has greater potential for change and adjustment as consumer/ community demands change and
- the alternative school tends to be small(100 - 200 students) and as a result, there are fewer rules and bureaucratic constraints on staff and students.

[3] See "Results and Observations" for a description of what makes these programs alternatives.

Need

That opinion given by the participants in the questionnaire or interview relating to a perceived exigency for the education system.

Opinion

A verbalized measurable cognition(Hovland and Rosenberg, 1960). Opinions are verbalizations whereas attitudes refer to an intervening variable which may be unconscious.

Public Opinion

The aggregate opinion of a group of individuals who comprise a public(Allport, 1937) and is of a temporary nature(Christiansen, 1959).

Regular or Non-alternative Public School

Those schools which share common educational practices and are common throughout the public school system.

E. Assumptions

1. Criticisms and reforms in the American educational system have application to the Canadian educational system.
2. The opinions expressed by the participants reflect their actual thoughts on the subject and are not expressions of what they think they "ought to" say.
3. Parents chose to send their child to a public alternative school because they believed it had something to offer their child not otherwise present in

the regular non-alternative program.

F. Delimitations

1. The study will be conducted in two schools each containing alternative and non-alternative components.
2. The data will be collected in the City of Edmonton beginning March 1980 through June 1980 and will have application only to those opinions expressed during that time interval.
3. The data will consist only of the results obtained through questionnaires and interviews of the participants.

G. Limitations

Interpretation of the results will be done in consideration of the following:

1. The study will limit opinion measurement explicitly to those opinions expressed in the questionnaires and interviews.
2. A sampling bias exists in that only returned questionnaires can be analyzed.
3. The method of data collection gives an inherent bias by presenting limited information to the respondent. This implies an omission of the information received. Many words(such as education) will not have the same meaning to each respondent.
4. The interpretation of the results applies only to those

schools studied and only during the time interval that they were involved in the study. No extrapolation of results for a broader population or an extended time interval is possible.

5. The opinions of parents and educators responding to the survey instrument will reflect their particular biases toward the education system. This study will not attempt to validate(prove or disprove) these biases, only to record and describe them.
6. The interview results will be interpreted by the author through his personal perspective.

III. SUMMARY OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

Major criticisms of the public educational system have occurred since its inception. Rousseau(1750) expressed a fundamental criticism of the interaction between students and teachers:

> With our foolish and pedantic methods, we are always preventing children from learning what they could learn much better by themselves, while we neglect what we alone can teach them.

Dewey(1938) believed that one of the fundamental problems with the education system was that it attempted to prepare students for life rather than have students experience life. In practice, education was separated from life experience and was not an "active transaction between students and society".

One of Canada's leading science educators, Dr. David Suzuki, criticizes schools for their inability to prepare students for the future.

> Today our educational institutions fail to "educate". Instead they are turning out two increasingly estranged groups, each of them extremely ignorant of the other. One speaks the jargon of scientific terminology, has little grounding in literature, philosophy, history or religion and yet will become scientists, engineers and doctors who will apply revolutionary tools to change us and the environment. The other group comprises the majority of society and is alienated from science, believes science is an esoteric activity of the mathematically gifted and doesn't feel science has much relevance to every day life.(Suzuki, 1980)

Because of these types of criticisms, radical attempts at educational reform have occurred. Neill(1960) and Illich(1971) have attempted to put into practice their views of what education should be. Illich rejects schools entirely as educational institutions and Neill theorizes that "our whole education system is full of lies. Our schools hand on the lie that obedience and industry are virtues and that History and French are education."(Neill, 1960)

Why are these types of reform occuring? Generalized descriptions of the public education system have been given by Hurn(1978), Dreeben(1968), Goodlad(1977), Schwab(1974), and Bruner(1971). Hurn(1978) describes two paradigms showing the present day relationship between schooling and society. His 'functional paradigm' views schooling as "essentially a rational device for sorting and selecting individuals in an increasingly complex and expert society and transmitting consentual values to the young". His 'radical paradigm' describes schools as "institutions preserving the power of existing elites rather than facilitating the mobility of talent; institutions which far from teaching democratic and humane values must repress the natural talents, intelligence and creativity of the child". This latter paradigm is in keeping with Kohlburg's(1971) findings. The former paradigm is in agreement with Dreeben(1968). According to Dreeben, school serves the socializing function of linking family life to public life. The school's function in society is thus to provide "experiences conducive to learning the principles of conduct and patterns of behavior appropriate to adulthood". He classifies the outcomes of schooling into two categories:

1. traditional - acquiring knowledge and skills through instruction and
2. normative - learning principles of conduct, partly through sanctioning.

With reference to this traditional category, Goodlad(1977) perceives the function of schooling as "providing something that can be identified and subsequently packaged or arranged for acquisition". He describes school as "a place to teach what has already been defined for acquisition". Goodlad advocates seeking an alternative to this approach.

Schwab(1964) supported an alternative school ideology based on disciplines. He discussed meeting the diversity of individual learning needs by creating a number of different structures, each appropriate or "best" for a given discipline or group of disciplines. In his 1964 approach, the structure of the disciplines took precedence over the students' personal needs. By 1974, Schwab's view had changed. He began advocating an alternative approach which incorporated both student needs and interests. Bruner took a similar stance(1971). In reference to past curricular reforms, he asked "Did revision of the Curriculum suffice, or was a more fundamental restructuring of the entire educational system in order?"

Silberman(1971) described the basic nature of public schools as existing within a framework characterized by:

1. elements of compulsion - attendance is required by law

2. children not only must be in school, they must be in school for long periods of time
3. school is a collective experience and
4. school is almost always evaluative.

With regards to these last two points, Bloom(1976) states:

> At no other time in his career as a worker, member of a family, citizen or person engaged in leisure activities will he be judged so frequently....These judgements arise because almost all the student's school learning is as a member of a group.

In addition to these general areas of concern with the public education system more specific problems have been described. The effects of evaluation on self-concept(Bloom, 1976) and moral development(Kohlburg, 1971) have been analyzed. The stability of a student's achievement within a group over a long period of time has been documented by Bloom(1976), Bracht and Hopkins(1972), and Hicklin(1962).

According to Bloom, unsuccessful students not only remain unsuccessful in school institutions, but they develop a sense of failure: "if most encounters with learning tasks are accompanied by appraisals of inadequacy, the individual is likely to develop a deep sense of inadequacy". The Coleman Report(1966) related the problems of student discipline in slum schools to this sense of failure: "chronic failure makes self-discipline hard to come by; it is these children's failure to learn that produces the behavior problem of the slum school".

The existence of a 'hidden curriculum' in schools has been identified by critics. Bloom(1976) identified two types of courses being taught in public schools: 'manifest curriculum' and 'latent curriculum'. 'Manifest curriculum' is "what the student is expected to learn" and contains the informational content of the subject areas. "It is visible, documented and a stated objective of the school." 'Latent curriculum' teaches each student who he is in relationship to others. According to Bloom(1976) this is not as visible, as well documented or a stated school objective; although it is an important part of the student's school experience.

Kohlburg(1971) identifies another 'hidden curriculum' - a social morality which is not part of the explicit curriculum. For example, the students' "only reason for not cheating is their fear of being caught and punished". He sees students as suppressing their own feelings and emotions and overtly adopting those of the teacher. He states that schools directly intervene with the development of moral judgement in children.

The result of some of these criticisms has been a public demand for the formation of alternative schools. Many different types of alternative schools have been established but it is difficult to generalize about them.

Deal and Nolan(1978) have identified four existing educational ideologies which influence school organization:

1. the "traditional" school organization
2. the "do your own thing" school organization

3. the "revolutionary" school organization and
4. the "negotiation" school organization.

Within the public alternative domain, Barr(1975) lists seven categories of schools:

- continuation schools
- learning centers
- schools-within-schools
- open schools
- schools without walls
- alternative school clusters
- multicultural schools and
- free schools.

Fritz(1975) identifies four types of public alternative schools:

- schools offering the basic academic program with a wide "experiential" component and individual work style
- schools serving a single clientele and/or cultural group
- schools with a heterogenous population but based on non-traditional school organization and administration and
- schools for drop-outs, those who were expelled or who have legal problems.

In 1975 alternative schools were not desired by the majority of the public. According to Fantini(1975), "85% of the nation's children attend public schools and the bulk of our support for school improvement has been with this public education sector. Yet while polls reveal that from 60 - 70% of those that use public schools express satisfaction with them, a critical mass of over 30% do not." Barr(1975) lists eight factors contributing to the development of large numbers of alternative schools, all due mainly to a critical opinion of public schools.

Gallup polls are conducted every year to elicit public opinion about education. A 1979 Gallup poll in the United States, listed seven areas for public school improvement. In order they are:

- improve quality of teachers(23%)
- increase discipline(20%)
- set higher standards(17%)
- give students more individual attention(16%)
- emphasis on the basics(15%)
- better management and direction of schools(7%) and
- establish closer relationships with parents(6%).

In Alberta, the Worth Commission(1972) advocated changes toward a more humanistic climate. It suggested that Alberta's present educational system was too fact oriented. Six years later, the Harder Report(1978), in dealing with the "back to the basics" movement, describes the provincial education system thus:

> In the past five years several major changes have occurred in Alberta Education. These changes...have left the general public with the feeling that standards have been lowered, and that student competencies are deteriorating.

The EPSB conducted its own system-wide public opinion survey in 1979. Using the questionnaire technique, the study found that

> ...parents and students have demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction with the education program....The marks received by elementary students were judged to be fair by 70% of the respondents (with) a third of the students at junior and senior high school expressing dissatisfaction.(EPSB, 1979)

However, in an October 1979 Gallup poll conducted in Alberta for the Minister's Advisory Committee on Student Achievement, 49% of those interviewed felt that the testing of achievement in schools was unsatisfactory. The 1980 EPSB Study found that although 71% of the elementary students felt that the marks they received were fair, only 50% of junior and senior high school students were satisfied with the way their marks were determined. In the same study 88% of the parents polled were satisfied with their child's school. Ninety-one per cent of the elementary parents polled felt that their children liked school, while 68% of the elementary students polled liked going to school. Sixty per cent of elementary students found school work interesting and 61% felt that their teachers cared about them. No opportunities were available for the respondents to give reasons for their answers to this poll.

In reference to the public school teachers' response, the EPSB Study stated:

> More than half of the staff(52%) felt that the system was doing an inadequate job of communicating its goals, philosophies and policies effectively. Less than one half of the staff believed that the system consistently implemented its goals, philosophies and policies, and only 55% felt that the systems goals, philosophies and policies were consistent with their own.

Regarding the elementary students polled, the Study stated:

> Within each period their response to the usefulness of homework, fairness of marks, and whether they liked school were consistently lower than their responses to the other categories of questions.

If public opinion polls reveal specific concerns about the educational system, are there some areas where efforts towards addressing these concerns are being made? Many alternative schools were established for this particular purpose.

Comparisons of students of alternative schools and students of regular/non-alternative schools indicate the following differences.

Duke(1976) has found a difference in decision making processes. An evaluation done in Canada by the Individual Education Center(IndEC)(1978) showed that 98% of the 39 IndEC parent respondents indicated a concern for student feelings as being an important part of schooling. Eighteen per cent of IndEC parent respondents agreed with the statement "Subject mastery is more important than development of self-concept" whereas there was a 33% agreement among 39 regular school parents. Twenty-five per cent of IndEC parent respondents(n=39) agreed with the statement "Children should not question what teachers tell them to do" compared to a 31% agreement by regular school parents(n=39).

Trickett(1978) found alternative school students to score high on the dimensions of: relatedness of class involvement, affiliation as peer relatedness, and teacher support as teacher-peer relatedness. He also found alternative schools did not emphasize the classroom aspect of competition. Alternative schools were found to score high in order and organization(the degree to which classroom material is well organized and the class "under control") as well as student innovative ability.

Clinchy *et al.* (1977) compared traditional (non-alternative) and progressive(alternative) senior high school students. They found that the progressive school seniors scored higher on Kohlburg's scale of moral development than did traditional school seniors.

Strath and Hash(1979) analyzed the effects of an alternative school on adolescent self-esteem. They found that early adolescent students in an alternative school program showed significant positive changes in their attitudes toward themselves during one school semester. However, these students were not compared to regular program students.

Goodlad(1980) is conducting a study of schooling in the United States. His stated intent is "to improve schooling by finding out what is happening in and around the school". He states, "not enough is known about the importance of what school does or doesn't do for school children." Some preliminary findings are that 95% of the over 8000 parent respondents felt that they played no role in curriculum decisions; whereas, 50% stated that they would like to be involved in this decision making process. When asked to respond to the statement "I usually look forward to each working day at this school" 12% of the teacher respondents strongly agreed; whereas, 20% disagreed. Goodlad's final report is forthcoming at the time of this study.

Smith(1981)found large differences in the degree to which 13 schools (7 alternative and 6 comprehensive high schools) met students needs for friendship and belonging, for achievement and for self-actualization and personal growth. Alternative school students were far more satisfied with their growth opportunities in these three areas than were conventional school students.

Alternative schools have been offered as a solution to some of the criticisms against public education. However, Deal and Nolan(1978) have described the lack of research and analysis of alternative schools.

> We actually know little about them. There is a voluminous amount of literature which either extols the virtues or denigrates the basic character of alternative schools. But there simply is not much in the growing literature of alternative schools which approaches these new institutions theoretically, describes them empirically, or provides operational guidelines...

In conclusion, some criticisms of the public education system have been described. The development of alternative schools has been suggested as one possible solution to some of these criticisms. Public opinion is both an important causal factor in the development of alternatives and an important indicator of what problems still exist in the public education system. Soliciting public opinion has been suggested as one method of measuring the success(or failure) of alternative approaches to public education. In Edmonton, descriptive documentation of public opinion of public alternative schools is lacking.

IV. METHOD

A. General Background

A study conducted by Goodlad(1980) provides a rationale for the present study's methodology: "The descriptive data for any school derived from observations, questionnaires and interviews provide a common basis for discussing preferences and alternatives." Goodlad's study obtained data from three major sources:

1. questionnaires from students, teachers, principals, parents, school board members, and central office administrators
2. observational data pertaining to classroom or other instructional learning centers and
3. interviews with principals and teachers whose classrooms were observed.

The current study obtained data from questionnaires completed by teachers, principals and parents and from interviews with some of the same parents.

Public opinion can be obtained from three types of polls which differ on the basis of the data gathering procedure used(Erdos, 1970):

1. personal interview
2. telephone survey and
3. mail survey.

The current study obtained data through modifications of procedures 1 and 3.

Grobman(1968) noted that any questionnaire construction incorporates a bias by limiting the view of questions to only those asked by the constructors. She cautioned against making questionnaires unnecessarily complicated or complex and noted that people may be good at interpreting questionnaires due to their school experience. The questionnaire was constructed and administered following Helmstadter's(1970) nine point guideline.

The interview technique was also utilized in this study. Helmstadter(1970) listed four advantages and three disadvantages of interviews. The advantages are:

1. Some kinds of information may be impossible to obtain by other means. For example, the report of thoughts while carrying out an activity seem to demand an immediate verbal response.
2. The interview method is direct.
3. The interviewer can modify the situation when necessary.
4. Under certain circumstances, the interviewer can actively participate in the data gathering process.

The disadvantages are:

1. There is always the question of how much of what has been extracted is attributable to the respondent himself, and how much is attributable to the special traits of the interviewer.
2. It assumes that the respondent is not only willing but able to provide reliable results.
3. There is no way yet known to overcome the memory bias

which leads us to remember certain things and forget others or to fill in when recall becomes hazy.

The present study is a descriptive study using a questionnaire and interview to determine opinions. Two public schools have been selected for this study, both of which contain alternative components.

B. Design of the Study

Population

The populations studied were the educators(principals and teachers) in the two selected public schools and parents of children attending these same schools. The student population was not sampled because it was assumed that at the elementary school level it was the parents who made the decision regarding which school and which program their child would attend. The specific grades studied were those for which both alternative and non-alternative programs were offered.

The total alternative population received questionnaires. The total non-alternative school population at the same grade level received questionnaires. The teachers of these same grades and the principal of each school also received a questionnaire. Interviews were conducted with samples from the parent respondents. The results consisted, therefore, of samples from both the alternative and non-alternative populations, in each school, at comparable grade levels.

Questionnaire

It was hoped that the questionnaire technique, although soliciting information from the total population, would obtain responses from at least 60-70% of the population. The higher the percentage of responses, the greater the confidence in generalizing about the surveyed school population. A low response rate would still give results, although it would restrict making generalizations about the total surveyed population.

Interviews

A group of parents(n=18) was interviewed from each school. These parents were non-randomly selected on the basis of their willingness to be interviewed as determined by the questionnaire. Where insufficient parents consented to be interviewed, names were selected at random from each grade and an interview requested by phone.

The interview technique was carried out in accordance with the restrictions outlined by Helmstadter(1970). In the opinion of the author, directness of personal communication (Helmstadter, 1970) and openness of expressed opinion (Newcomb, 1965) were the main advantages of applying the interview technique to this particular study.

C. Details of Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of both ranking and rating type questions(see Appendix 2). The rating questions were based on the five point Likert scale model. Questions were adapted from the 1979 Gallup poll, Birnie's study(1972), and Goodlad's(1980) research, "A Study of Schooling", which asks the questions:

1. What do parents, teachers and students perceive to be the major problems at their schools? What are their beliefs and attitudes regarding some of the current issues today?
2. Do parents see the schools as meeting the needs of their children? How satisfied are parents with their schools in general?

The interview format consisted of approximately half hour interviews with at least one parent/guardian. The interview itself consisted of 10 questions(see Appendix 2) and conformed to the standards set by Helmstadter(1970). The interviews were taped and the tapes transcribed for permanent reference.

The questionnaire and interview format were given for word clarification and content validation to: professors (n=7), graduate students(n=5), teachers (n=5), and parents (n=10). Revisions were made based on the recommendations from the above group. Then a small group of parents(n=10) were asked to determine which questions caused confusion and if they felt any information was lacking. A second revision was completed based on these parent's recommendations. The final(twice revised) questionnaire and interview questions were used in this particular study.

D. Schedule of Activities

January 1980

Interviews with N. Deimert, EPSB, to assess feasibility of the study.

February 1980

Request for approval of the study was submitted to EPSB. The questionnaire and interview were designed, revised and pilot tested.

March 1980

The Waldorf-Parkallen Study

A meeting with the principal occurred to outline the objectives and methods of the study. The principal was asked what she perceived to be the criterion on which parents based their decision to send their children to this particular school and to enroll them in either the alternative or non-alternative program. The principal was given a questionnaire to complete. Class lists of alternative and non-alternative students in the K-3 programs were requested and provided. The objectives and methods of the study were then outlined to the staff. The K-3 teachers were given questionnaires to complete themselves and sufficient 'parent' questionnaires to distribute to each student on their class lists. Students were asked to take a questionnaire home, to have it completed by their parent(s)/guardian(s) and then to return the completed questionnaire to the school. The returned questionnaires were collected from the General Office. The parents were not asked to mail return the questionnaires due to limited funding for the study. Parent interviews were arranged by telephone and conducted in the respondents home by the author or an experienced interviewer who trained with the author.

May 1980

The Caraway-Garneau Study

This study followed the same format as the Waldorf-Parkallen Study with the exception that all of the Garneau parents were phoned and requested to return their completed questionnaires if they had not already done so. This action was necessitated by the low return rate of completed questionnaires from this particular group of parents. In addition, the Caraway-Garneau Study involved Grades 1-6, whereas, the Waldorf-Parkallen Study involved K-3.

E. Analysis of Results

Mean responses of the questionnaire data were calculated.[4] Trends in mean responses were made from comparisons among the following variables: grade level; regular or alternative program; parent, teacher or administrator; Waldorf-Parkallen or Caraway-Garneau. Data generated concerned the following:

1. the opinions of parents and teachers in the two alternative school programs toward the alternative school programs
2. the opinions of parents and teachers in the two alternative school programs toward the EPSB, in general
3. the opinions of parents and teachers in the two non-alternative school programs toward the regular school programs
4. the opinions of parents and teachers in the two non-alternative school programs toward the EPSB, in general, and
5. the opinions of administrators toward the alternative and non-alternative programs in their schools and toward the EPSB, in general.

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[4] When the same parent(s)/guardian(s) had two children in the same class, only one questionnaire response was counted to determine the mean response for that particular class.

V. RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

A. Development of the Alternative Programs in Edmonton

The educational approach and philosophy of both of these alternative schools was initially developed by parent associations outside of the public school system. When each parent association had sufficient parent support, they approached the public school board for financial support. The public school board chose to endorse both of these programs and incorporated them into the public school system. By so doing, the school board recognized the legitimacy of the needs, desires and concerns of these parent groups. A brief description of the historical and philosophical background of each alternative program is described below. Parent and educator opinions evolved in this historical context.

Waldorf-Parkallen

The Waldorf program was established in Parkallen School in 1979. It began with three teachers for its sixty students enrolled in Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2. The Waldorf School Association was formed in 1975 and children of its members became its first students. Prospective parents now receive information about the Waldorf program through the school newsletter, a specially prepared pamphlet and a series of lectures sponsored by the Waldorf School Association. Children are selected through parent-teacher consultation on the basis of suitability for the school's program.

Although there are two other Waldorf schools in Canada, Edmonton's is the first and only one which is included in the public school system. In the last sixty years Waldorf has grown to be the largest private, non-parochial school system in the world(Luft, 1976).

The Waldorf program is based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner(anthroposophy) and attempts to provide a more spirit-conforming pedagogy than other programs. Most Waldorf educators have at least two years training at special institutes where they are taught to practice education as a creative art within a structured pedagogy.

The students receive instruction for the main lesson from the same teacher from Grade 1 through to Grade 8. In addition, instruction is in block lessons where the same topic is taught every morning for a period of two to four weeks. This allows the teacher to present each subject fully and imaginatively and to develop a mood of reverence for life and knowledge(Piening and Lyons, 1979).

The three steps of Waldorf pedagogy are ordered as follows: encounter-perception, experience-feeling, and concept-idea.

> The objectives of the Waldorf program are to engage the child's feeling and will as well as intellect, also to offer the child a wide range of interrelated experiences, thereby fostering a sense for the wholeness of human knowledge. Visual dramatic arts and handicrafts are used to bring all subjects, including the sciences, virtually alive to the child.(Waldorf School Association Handout, 1979)

A detailed description of Steinerian philosophy is beyond the scope of this study. However this philosophy can be generally related to parent and educator opinions. Parental opinion about Waldorf philosophy seems to focus on a key introductory concept - "the concept of metamorphosis is absolutely fundamental to the Steinerian psychology and to the education based on it"(Piening and Lyons, 1979). The child's physical changes of second dentition and puberty are directly related to his/her intellectual changes. Developmental stages have been described by Steiner and specific curricula have been designed in relationship to these stages(Piening and Lyons, 1979).

Caraway-Garneau

The Caraway program, originally funded by a University Grant(1972), was established as a cooperative nursery school and called the Caraway Creative Learning Center. It was located in St. Anne's School in Riverdale and consisted of one teacher, an aide, and the children from four families. The program's approach was based on the British Infant Schools' philosophy of family aged grouping. The main selection factor for participation in the program was parental commitment.

During its second year, Caraway had 25 students enrolled in Grades 1 to 6. It was privately funded and employed two teachers, both of whom were still teaching in the Caraway Program at the time of this study.

An application for admittance to the Edmonton Public School system was accepted by the EPSB in 1979 under the Alternative Program Scheme. A parent advisory committee(P.A.C.) was established at the same time. The Caraway Program was then relocated to Garneau School where it occupied two classrooms and had an enrollment of fifty students divided loosely into Grades 1 to 6. It had two teachers and an aide, the latter funded by the P.A.C..

In 1975, Caraway expanded to sixty-five students and three teachers and occupied four classrooms. This enrollment was considered maximal and has been maintained. At the time of this study sixty-six students were enrolled in the Caraway Program.

The main reason for establishing the Caraway Program was that it provided a more flexible and interpersonal environment for students than did the existing public school system. Its philosophy and methodology were derived from those of the British Infant School[8] and included family aged grouping, an integrated curriculum, discovery learning, an emphasis on the creative aspects of the curriculum and a language program based on individual student needs. As well, the British Infant School was revised to meet the provincial curriculum guidelines.

The aim of the program is to develop three attributes: to assume responsibility for one's own learning; to relate to materials, ideas, experiences and each other; and to risk or become involved in learning and caring about that learning.

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[8] Classes are grouped with family members in the same group, not necessarily according to age.

Strong parental commitment has been maintained through the P.A.C., which is involved in teacher selection, curriculum decisions, donation and gathering of materials, and helping with the upkeep of the school environment. This is in keeping with Brosseau's(1973) recommendation that if parents are to have an important role to play in their children's education, methods must be developed which will permit them to become more directly involved in the formal education of their children. Few changes have occurred in the Caraway Program since its inception. However, because parent and educator opinions were determined by the way the school was operating at the time of this study, a brief history of the program's development since 1974 will be described.

Some of the changes to this particular alternative program include those resulting from the transition to public from private funding, individual teacher self-growth during the course of operating the program, and the shift in prevailing social concerns. The alternative parents and teachers interviewed stated that a major change occurred when Caraway became part of the Edmonton Public School System. The teachers described changes in their duties to include highly structured parent-teacher interviews, hallway supervision, the use of the strap, and formal testing procedures. However, the Caraway Program remained essentially intact because of the flexibilty allowed in its operation. The parents and teachers both maintained that the P.A.C. was a major factor in retaining the alternative learning environment when Caraway joined the Public School system. Because Caraway initially operated privately, outside public funding, the P.A.C. had assumed responsibility for teacher and pupil selection and parental commitment. When Caraway joined the public school system, the P.A.C. reserved these same duties. Another change to the Caraway Program has been in the selection criteria for students. According to parents and teachers, Caraway has been receiving and accepting more applications from parents living alternative life styles, from single parent families, and from parents with higher academic backgrounds. As well, the parental commitment of both time and money has been increased.

Prospective parents receive information about the Caraway Program through the school newsletter and parent meetings arranged by the P.A.C..

Although the process of accepting a private alternative school into the public system was not well established in 1974, the EPSB now has a Director of Program Development who aids private schools in their application for incorporation into the Edmonton Public School system.

WALDORF-PARKALLEN QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN.

Table 1. Waldorf Results (alternative)

Grade	# returned / # sent	%	# consented§ / # returned	Teachers
K	7/17	41.2	6/7	1
1	8/20	40	6/8	1
2	10/20	50	8/10	1
Totals	25/57	43.9	20/25	3

Table 2. Parkallen Results (non-alternative)

Grade	# returned / # sent	%	# consented§ / # returned	Teachers
K	4/10	40	1/4	1
1	5/19	26.3	0/5	0
2	6/9	66.7	1/6	1
Totals	15/38	39.5	2/17	2

CARAWAY-GARNEAU QUESTIONNAIRE RETURN.

Table 3. Caraway Results (alternative)

Grade	# returned / # sent	%	# consented§ / # returned	Teachers
1 & 2	10/21	47.6	9/10	1
3 & 4	11/22	50	9/11	1
5 & 6	6/25	24	5/6	1
Totals	27/68	39.7	23/27	3

Table 4. Garneau Results (non-alternative)

Grade	# returned / # sent	%	# consented§ / # returned	Teachers
1	3/23	13	2/3	1
2	10/19	52.6	5/10	0
3	6/24	25	2/6	0
4	11/25	44	7/11	0
5 & 6	8/25	32	4/8	1
Totals	38/116	32.8	20/38	2

§ number of respondents consenting to be interviewed on the questionnaire

TABLE 5A. WALDORF-PARKALLEN PARENT AVERAGE RATINGS FOR DESIRED AND PERCEIVED DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS.

GRADE	KINDERGARTEN				GRADE 1				GRADE 2			
EDUCATIONAL GOAL	DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED	
	W	P	W	P	W	P	W	P	W	P	W•	P
Creativity	5.0	3.8°	4.7	3.3	4.8	4.2	4.5	3.4	5.0•	4.5	4.8	3.3
Achievement	4.3	4.0	3.3	3.5	4.5°	4.6′	4.1*	3.4	4.4*	4.7	4.1	3.5
Self-concept	5.0	3.3	4.1	3.3	5.0••	4.6	4.5	3.4	5.0	4.5	4.6	3.5
Positive attitude toward learning	4.9	4.0	4.6	3.5	4.9	5.0	4.6	4.0	4.8	5.0	4.6	3.8
Curiousity	4.7	3.8	3.9	3.3	4.9	4.2	4.5	3.4	5.0	4.2	4.3	3.7
Self-determination	4.6	4.0	3.7	3.0	4.8	4.2	4.3	3.6	4.9	4.5	4.1	3.2
Independence	4.6	4.0	3.7	3.0	4.8	4.2	4.3	3.6	4.9	4.5	4.1	3.8
Freedom from anxiety	4.7	3.3	4.0	2.3	4.8	4.2	4.8	3.0	4.8	4.2	4.1	3.5
Cooperation	4.7	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.8	4.8	4.3	4.0	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.3
Self-growth	4.8	3.3°	4.3°°	3.7	4.9	4.6	4.5	3.8	4.9	3.8••	4.6	3.8

°° n=3, •• n=5, ° n=6, * n=7, • n=9
W = Waldorf
P = Parkallen

TABLE 5B. HIGHEST AND LOWEST DESIRED AND DEVELOPED AVERAGE RATINGS OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS-WALDORF-PARKALLEN PARENTS.

RESPONDENTS	KINDERGARTEN				GRADE 1				GRADE 2			
EDUCATIONAL GOAL	DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED	
	W	P	W	P	W	P	W	P	W	P	W	P
Creativity	H		H			L			H		H	
Achievement	L	H	L		L		L		L		L	
Self-concept	H	L			H				H			
Positive attitude toward learning		H				H		H		H		
Curiousity						L			H			
Self-determination		H				L					L	L
Independence		H				L					L	
Freedom from anxiety		L		L		L	H	L			L	
Cooperation		H		H				H				H
Self-growth		L								L		

W = Waldorf

P = Parkallen

H = highest rated quality

L = lowest rated quality

TABLE 6A. CARAWAY-GARNEAU PARENT AVERAGE RATINGS FOR DESIRED AND PERCEIVED DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS.

GRADE	GRADES 1 & 2				GRADES 3 & 4				GRADES 5 & 6			
EDUCATIONAL GOAL	DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED	
	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G
Creativity	4.9	4.2	4.2	3.2	4.6	4.4	4.0	3.3	4.8	4.6	4.3	3.9
Achievement	4.0	4.5	3.7	3.4	4.3	4.4	4.1	3.3	4.2	3.8	3.8	3.8
Self-concept	4.9	4.5	4.5	3.4	5.0	4.5	4.3	3.2	5.0	4.8	4.5	3.9
Positive attitude toward learning	5.0	4.6	4.2	3.4	5.0	4.8	4.5	3.4	5.0	4.8	4.3	3.6
Curiousity	4.9	4.6	4.2	3.4	4.7	4.6	4.1	3.4	4.7	4.6	4.0	3.9
Self-determination	4.7	4.4	4.2	3.2	4.9	4.4	4.2	3.0	4.7	4.4	4.0	3.8
Independence	4.7	4.4	4.3	3.2	4.9	4.4	4.4	3.2	4.8	4.4	4.4	3.9
Freedom from anxiety	5.0	4.5	4.3	3.2°	4.7	4.5	4.3	2.8	4.7	4.6	4.5	3.6
Cooperation	5.0	4.5	4.4	3.5	4.7	4.5	4.6	3.5	4.7	4.6	4.2	3.8
Self-growth	4.8	4.6	4.4	3.2	4.9	4.6	4.5	3.2	4.8	4.6	4.5	3.9

° n=12
C = Caraway
G =Garneau

TABLE 6B. HIGHEST AND LOWEST DESIRED AND DEVELOPED AVERAGE RATINGS OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS-CARAWAY-GARNEAU PARENTS.

RESPONDENTS	GRADES 1 & 2				GRADES 3 & 4				GRADES 5 & 6			
EDUCATIONAL GOAL	DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED	
	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G
Creativity		L		L		L	L					H
Achievement	L		L		L	L			L	L	L	
Self-concept			H		H				H	H	H	H
Positive attitude toward learning	H	H			H	H	H		H	H		L
Curiousity		H										H
Self-determination				L		L						
Independence				L		L						H
Freedom from anxiety	H			L				L			H	
Cooperation	H			H				H				
Self-growth		H		L								H

C = Caraway

G = Garneau

H = highest rated quality

L = lowest rated quality

TABLE 7A. TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR AVERAGE RATINGS FOR DESIRED AND PERCEIVED DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS.

EDUCATORS	WALDORF-PARKALLEN TEACHERS				CARAWAY-GARNEAU TEACHERS				ADMINISTRATORS			
EDUCATIONAL GOAL	DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED	
	W	P	W	P	C	G	C	G	P	G	P	G
Creativity	4.5•	4	4•	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	4	3
Achievement	4•	4	3.5•	4	4.3	5	3.3	4	5	4	4	4
Self-concept	5	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4	4
Positive attitude toward learning	4.7	4	4.7	4	4.7	5	3.7	4	5	5	4	4
Curiousity	4.7	4	4.7	4	4.7	5	3.3	3	5	5	3	3
Self-determination	4.5•	4	3.5•	4	5	5	3.7	4	5	4	3	3
Independence	4.5•	4	3.5•	4	5	5	3.3	4	5	5	3	3
Freedom from anxiety	4.7	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	3	3
Cooperation	4.7	4	3.7	4	4.7	5	3.7	4	5	5	4	4
Self-growth	5	4	4.3	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	3	4

• n= 2

W = Waldorf, P = Parkallen

C = Caraway, G = Garneau

TABLE 7B. HIGHEST AND LOWEST DESIRED AND DEVELOPED AVERAGE RATINGS OF EDUCATIONAL GOALS-WALDORF-PARKALEEN TEACHERS AND CARAWAY-GARNEAU TEACHERS.

RESPONDENTS	WALDORF-PARKALLEN TEACHERS				CARAWAY-GARNEAU TEACHERS			
EDUCATIONAL GOAL	DESIRED		DEVELOPED		DESIRED		DEVELOPED	
	W	P	W	P	C	G	C	G
Creativity		H		H	H	L	H	L
Achievement	L	H	L	H	L	L	L	H
Self-concept	H	H		H	H	H	H	H
Positive attitude toward learning		H	H	H		H		H
Curiousity		H	H	H		H	L	L
Self-determination		H	L	H	H	L		
Independence		H	L	H	H	H	L	
Freedom from anxiety		H		H	H	H	H	L
Cooperation		H		H		H		H
Self-growth	H	H		H	H	H	H	

W = Waldorf C = Caraway

P = Parkallen G = Garneau

H = highest rated quality

L = lowest rated quality

B. Questionnaire Results

(For a detailed analysis see Appendix 4)

Questionnaire Return

(See Tables 1, 2, 3&4) From the returned questionnaires the following trends emerged:

* The total questionnaire return rate for both schools was higher for the alternative parents(Waldorf and Caraway) than for the non-alternative parents (Parkallen and Garneau)(see Tables 1 - 4).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the questionnaire return rate was higher for the alternative parents in Kindergarten and Grade 1; and higher for the regular parents in Grade 2 (see Tables 1 & 2).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the questionnaire return rate was higher for the alternative parents in the combined Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 3 and 4; and higher for the regular parents in the combined Grades 5 and 6(see Tables 3 & 4).
* In both schools, more parents from the alternative programs consented to interviews than did parents from the regular programs(see Tables 1 - 4).
* In both schools, the teacher questionnaire return rate was higher from the alternative programs than from the non-alternative programs(see Tables 1 - 4).
* Because of the low return rate from the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the method was modified in the case of the Caraway-Garneau parents - that is, all of the

Garneau parents(n=116) were phoned and asked to please complete and return their questionnaires. The return rate was still low.

* The return rates for both schools were low and, therefore, no generalizations for the whole population could be made.

Desired and Perceived Development of Educational Goals

(See Tables 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 7A&7B)

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

For the questionnaires returned by Waldorf-Parkallen parents during March 1980 these results can be summarized as follows:

* In all categories and in all Grades K-2, the opinions of parents of Waldorf school children of the extent to which they desire schools to develop each of these educational goals is higher as measured on a Likert 5 point scale than the opinions of the parents of Parkallen children except in Grade 1 in the areas of self-growth, positive attitude toward learning and achievement; and in Grade 2 in the areas of positive attitude toward learning and achievement where the trend is reversed.

* In all categories and in all Grades K-2, the opinions of parents of Waldorf children of the extent to which they percieve the school develops each of these educational goals in their children is higher as measured on a Likert 5 point scale than

the opinions of the parents of Parkallen children except at the Kindergarten level in the area of achievement where the trend is reversed.

The Waldorf teachers most highly desired educational goals were self-concept and self-growth; the Caraway teachers most highly desired educational goals were creativity, self-concept, self-determination, independence, freedom from anxiety and self-growth(see Table 7A & 7B). The least desired educational goal for both Waldorf and Caraway teachers was achievement(see Tables 7A & 7B). The greatest discrepancies between desired and developed were in the areas of self-growth, independence and cooperation for Waldorf teachers and in the area of independence for Caraway teachers(see Table 7A). The Parkallen teachers rated all of the educational goals as desirable and rated each as developed to a better than average extent(see Tables 7A & 7B). The Garneau teachers rated all of the educational goals except creativity as strongly desired and rated their development as average or better than average(see Tables 7A & 7B). The Parkallen principal perceived the greatest discrepancies between desired and developed to fall in the areas of curiosity, self-determination, independence, freedom from anxiety, and self-growth(see Tables 7A & 7B). The Garneau principal perceived the greatest discrepancies between desired and developed to fall in the areas of creativity, curiosity, independence and freedom from anxiety(see Tables 7A & 7B). The least desired educational goal was achievement according to Waldorf teachers, Caraway teachers and the Garneau principal; and creativity according to the Parkallen principal(see Tables 7A & 7B).

A positive attitude towards learning is the most highly desired educational goal according to non-alternative parents and teachers in both schools(see Tables 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 7A & 7B). Self-concept is the most highly desired educational goal of Waldorf parents and teachers(see Tables 5A , 5B, 7A & 7B). Cooperation was perceived to be the most highy developed educational goal by Parkallen parents and teachers(see Tables 5A, 5B, 7A & 7B). Achievement is the least developed educational goal according to Waldorf and Caraway parents and teachers(see Tables 5A, 5B, 6A , 6B, 7A & 7B) Freedom from anxiety is the least developed educational goal according to Garneau parents and teachers(see Tables 6A, 6B, 7A & 7B).

TABLE 8. AVERAGE RATINGS OF SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS BY PARENTS, TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL AT WALDORF-PARKALLEN.

RESPONDENTS	KINDERGARTEN PARENTS		GRADE 1 PARENTS		GRADE 2 PARENTS		EDUCATORS TEACHERS		EDUCATORS PRINCIPAL
CHARACTERISTIC	W°	P	W	P	W	P°°	W	P	
Qualified teachers	4.5	4.5	4.4	3.8	4.4	4.3	3	3.5	3
Quality of teaching	4.5	4.5	4.7	3.6	4.5	4.7	3.7	4	4
Academic standards	3.3	4.5	3.9	3.2	4.1	4.0	3	3.5	3
Special programs	4.2	2.7	4.4	4.0	4.5	3.0	4.3	3.5	4
Level of discipline	3.9	3.3	4.2	3.4	3.7	3.8	3.5	4	3
Class size	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8	2.5	3.5	2
Proximity to home	2.5	3.7	2.5	3.8	1.6	4.3	2	3.5	2
Communication	4.2	3.0	4.3	3.8	3.4	4.7	4.5	3.5	4
Individual attention	4.2	3.0	4.6	4.2	4.4	3.8	3.7	4	4
Administration	3.7	2.7	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.3	4	3
Condition of school	3.3	3.0	3.5	3.8	2.6	3.3	3.3	3.5	3
Crime/vandalism	2.3	2.0	3.6	2.4	2.6	1.8	3	3	3

W = Waldorf, P = Parkallen

°n=6, °°n=8

TABLE 9. AVERAGE RATINGS OF SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS BY PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND PRINCIPAL AT CARWAY-GARNEAU.

RESPONDENTS	GRADES 1 & 2 PARENTS		GRADES 3 & 4 PARENTS		GRADES 5 & 6 PARENTS		EDUCATORS TEACHERS		PRINCIPAL
CHARACTERISTIC	C	G	C	G	C	G	C	G	
Qualified teachers	4.5	3.7	4.5	3.4	4.5	3.9	4.7	4	4
Quality of teaching	4.5	3.7	4.5	3.4	4.7	3.9	4.5	4	4
Academic standards	3.7	3.4	4.0	3.3	4.0	3.8	3.3	4	4
Special programs	3.7	3.3	3.8	2.9	4.0	3.5	3.3	3	3
Level of discipline	4.3	3.7	3.8	3.0	3.7	3.3	4	4	4
Class size	3.3	2.9	3.1	2.8	3.5	2.9	4	3	4
Proximity to home	2.4	2.9	2.2	3.3	2.8	2.8	2	4	2
Communication	4.4	3.3	4.1	3.1	4.0	3.4	4	3	2
Individual attention	4.4	3.4	4.1	3.2	4.3	3.0	4	5	4
Administration	3.0	3.5	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.5	4.3	3	3
Condition of school	2.3	2.4	3.0	2.9	2.3	2.5	2	3	1
Crime/vandalism	2.6	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.3	2	5

C = Caraway, G = Garneau

TABLE 10. A COMPARISON OF PARENT AVERAGE RATINGS OF SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS.

PARENTS	WALDORF	PARKALLEN	DIFFERENCE	CARAWAY	GARNEAU	DIFFERENCE
CHARACTERISTIC	n = 22	n = 14		n = 27	n = 38	
Qualified teachers	4.41	4.15	+0.26	4.50	3.63	+0.87
Quality of teaching	4.57	4.23	+0.34	4.56	3.67	+0.89
Academic standards	3.81	3.77	+0.04	3.90	3.46	+0.44
Special programs	3.90	3.29	+0.61	3.84	3.23	+0.61
Level of discipline	3.90	3.57	+0.33	3.93	3.13	+0.80
Class size	3.68	3.79	-0.11	3.07	2.89	+0.18
Proximity to home	2.18	4.00	-1.82	2.84	2.97	-0.13
Communication	3.91	4.00	-0.09	4.16	3.25	+0.91
Individual attention	4.40	3.79	+0.61	4.27	3.20	+1.07
Administration	3.78	3.79	-0.01	3.47	3.37	+0.10
Condition of school	3.14	3.43	-0.29	2.53	2.59	-0.06
Crime/vandalism	2.92	2.09	+0.83	2.91	3.05	-0.14

W = Waldorf, P = Parkallen

c = Caraway, G = Garneau

TABLE 11. A COMPARISON OF AVERAGE RATINGS BY ALTERNATIVE PARENTS AND ALTERNATIVE TEACHERS.

RESPONDENTS	WALDORF PARENTS n = 22	WALDORF TEACHERS n = 3	DIFFERENCE	CARAWAY PARENTS n = 27	CARAWAY TEACHERS n = 3	DIFFERENCE
CHARACTERISTIC						
Qualified teachers	4.41	3.01	+1.40	4.50	4.70	-0.20
Quality of teaching	4.57	3.70	+0.87	4.56	4.50	+0.06
Academic standards	3.81	3.01	+0.80	3.90	3.30	+0.60
Special programs	3.90	4.30	-0.40	3.84	3.33	+0.51
Level of discipline	3.90	3.50	+0.40	3.93	4.00	-0.07
Class size	3.68	2.48	+1.20	3.07	4.00	-0.93
Proximity to home	2.18	2.00	-0.02	2.84	2.00	+0.84
Communication	3.91	4.51	-0.60	4.16	4.00	+0.16
Individual attention	4.40	3.70	+0.70	4.27	4.00	+0.27
Administration	3.78	4.30	-0.52	3.47	4.30	-0.83
Condition of school	3.14	3.30	-0.16	2.53	2.00	+0.53
Crime/vandalism	2.92	1.8	+1.12	2.91	3.33	-0.42

Average Ratings of School Characteristics

(See Tables 8, 9, 10&11)

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- In both schools, the following characteristics were rated higher by alternative parents than by non-alternative parents: qualified teachers, quality of teaching, academic standards, special programs, level of discipline, and amount of attention given to individual students(see Tables 8, 9 & 10).
- In both schools, the following characteristics were rated lower by Grades 1 and 2 alternative parents than by Grades 1 and 2 non-alternative parents: proximity to home and condition of school building/equipment/facilities(see Tables 8, 9, 10).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the alternative parents also rated crime/vandalism higher than did the non-alternative parents(see Table 8).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the following characteristics were rated lower by alternative parents than by non-alternative parents: class size, proximity to home, communication between home and school, and condition of school building/equipment/facilities(see Table 8).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the alternative and the non-alternative parents rated administration about the same(see Table 8).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the following

characteristics were also rated higher by alternative parents than by non-alternative parents: class size and communication between home and school(see Table 9).

* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the following characteristics were rated lower by alternative parents than by non-alternative parents: proximity to home, administration,and condition of school building/equipment/facilities(see Table 9). In the Caraway-Garneau study, both alternative and non-alternative parents rated crime/vandalism about the same(see Table 9).
* The Caraway parents' average rating was higher than the Garneau parents' average rating for the following characteristics: communication between home and school, amount of attention given to individual students, and administration. However, in the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the non-alternative parents rated these same characteristics higher than did the alternative parents(see Table 10).
* In both schools, the alternative parents and alternative teachers rated the following characteristics higher than did the non-alternative parents and the non-alternative teachers: academic standards and special programs(see Tables 10 & 11).
* In both schools, the alternative parent average ratings were lower than the alternative teacher

average ratings for administration(see Tables 10 & 11).

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the following characteristics were rated lower by the alternative teachers than by the non-alternative teachers: qualified teachers, quality of teaching, academic standards, level of discipline, class size, proximity to home, amount of attention given to individual students, and condition of school building/equipment/facilities(see Table 8).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the following characteristics were rated higher by the alternative teachers than by the non-alternative teachers: special programs, communication between home and school, and administration(see Table 8).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the alternative and non-alternative teachers average ratings for crime/vandalism were about the same(see Table 8).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the alternative parent average ratings were higher than the alternative teacher average ratings for the following characteristics: qualified teachers, quality of teaching, academic standards, level of discipline, class size, and amount of attention given to individual students(see Table 11).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the alternative parent average ratings were lower than the

alternative teacher average ratings for the following characteristics: communication between home and school, administration, and condition of school building/equipment/facilities(see Table 11).

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the alternative parent average ratings were higher than the alternative teacher average ratings for the following characteristics: academic standards, special programs, communication between home and school, amount of attention given to individual students, and condition of school building/equipment/facilities(see Table 11).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the alternative parent average ratings were lower than the alternative teacher average ratings for the following characteristics: class size and administration(see Table 11).

TABLE 12. STRENGTHS OF THE EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS RANKED BY PARENTS - WALDORF-PARKALLEN.°

RESPONDENTS	KINDERGARTEN PARENTS		GRADE 1 PARENTS		GRADE 2 PARENTS	
CHARACTERISTICS	WALDORF (n=4)	PARKALLEN (n=4)	WALDORF (n=5)	PARKALLEN (n=5)	WALDORF (n=7)	PARKALLEN (n=6)
Qualified teachers	1	2	1	2	2	3
Teacher commitment	1	1	2			3
Discipline tactics		1			1	3
Academic standards	3	2	1	2	1	2
Financial support		1	3	1	2	
Individual attention						
Facilities and equipment	3	2	2	2	4	1
Communication		2	1	1	2	2
School management			1	2	3	
Emphasis on "the basics"	3			2		
Student attendance			1	1		
Enrichment and options		1		1	1	1
Development of self-worth					1	1
Community involvement	1		1			

°numbers represent the frequency the characteristic was ranked as either 1, 2 or 3.

TABLE 13. WEAKNESSES OF THE EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS RANKED BY PARENTS -WALDORF-PARKALLEN.[a]

RESPONDENTS	KINDERGARTEN PARENTS		GRADE 1 PARENTS		GRADE 2 PARENTS	
CHARACTERISTICS	WALDORF (n=4)	PARKALLEN (n=4)	WALDORF (n=6)	PARKALLEN (u=5)	WALDORF (n=9)	PARKALLEN (n=6)
Qualified teachers					1	1
Teacher commitment	1			1	1	1
Discipline tactics	3		1	3	2	1
Academic standards		1	1		1	2
Financial support			1	1	1	1
Individual attention	2	1	4	3	6	1
Facilities and equipment		1	1		2	3
Communication				2	1	1
Community involvement		1		1		
School management		1				1
Emphasis on "the basics"		1	1		1	2
Student attendance						
Enrichment and options		3	1			1
Development of self-worth	3	1	4	1	5	1

[a] numbers represent the frequency the characteristic was ranked as either 1, 2 or 3.

TABLE 14. STRENGTHS OF THE EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS RANKED BY PARENTS - CARAWAY-GARNEAU.*

RESPONDENTS	GRADES 1 & 2 PARENTS		GRADES 3 & 4 PARENTS		GRADES 5 & 6 PARENTS	
CHARACTERISTICS	CARAWAY (n=6)	GARNEAU (n=11)	CARAWAY (n=9)	GARNEAU (n=13)	CARAWAY (n=4)	GARNEAU (n=7)
Qualified teachers	3	7	3	8	2	2
Teacher commitment		5	1	5		2
Discipline tactics				1		
Academic standards	1	2	1	6	1	3
Financial support	4	2	3	1	1	
Individual attention		2		3		1
Facilities and equipment	5	1	7	2	3	2
Communication		2		2		2
Community involvement				1		
School management	1	1	5	3	3	2
Emphasis on "the basics"	1	2	4	1		2
Student attendance		1	1	1		1
Enrichment and options	1	1	1			1
Development of self-worth		5				2

*numbers represent the frequency a characteristic was ranked as either 1, 2 or 3.

TABLE 15. WEAKNESSES OF THE EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS RANKED BY PARENTS - CARAWAY-GARNEAU.°

RESPONDENTS	GRADES 1 & 2 PARENTS		GRADES 3 & 4 PARENTS		GRADES 5 & 6 PARENTS	
CHARACTERISTICS	CARAWAY (n=8)	GARNEAU (n=12)	CARAWAY (n=9)	GARNEAU (n=14)	CARAWAY (n=5)	GARNEAU (n=7)
Qualified teachers		1	2	2	1	1
Teacher commitment	2	3	3	3	1	
Discipline tactics	2	1	3	4	3	2
Academic standards		2	1	2		
Financial support	1	4	1	4	1	1
Individual attention	6	6	7	1	3	2
Facilities and equipment		2		3		3
Communication	1	5	1	4	1	
Community involvement		2		4		3
School management						
Emphasis on "the basics"	1	2		4		3
Student attendance		1		1		
Enrichment and options	3	4	2	2		2
Development of self-worth	5	1	6	4	2	1

°numbers represent the frequency the characteristic was ranked as either 1, 2 or 3.

TABLE 16. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AS RANKED BY EDUCATORS.*

RESPONDENTS	CARAWAY/GARNEAU (n=5)		WALDORF/PARKALLEN (n=4)	
CHARACTERISTICS	Strength	Weakness	Strength	Weakness
Qualified teachers	3		1	1
Teacher commitment	1	1	3	
Discipline tactics	1			
Academic standards	1		1	
Financial support	1	3	1	1
Individual attention	1		2	2
Facilities and equipment		2	2	
Communication		2		
Community involvment		1		
School management	2	1		2
Emphasis on "the basics"	1			
Student attendance	1			
Enrichment and options	1	1		3
Development of self-worth	1	2	1	

*numbers represent the frequency the characteristic was ranked as either 1, 2 or 3.

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the Edmonton Public Schools

(See Tables 12, 13, 14, 15&16)

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the non-alternative parents were: qualified teachers(9), academic standards(6), facilities and equipment(5), and relations and communication between home and school(5).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the characteristic most frequently mentioned as a srength by the alternative parents was: facilities and equipment(9).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by educators were: teacher commitment(3), amount of attention given to individual students(2), and facilities and equipment(2).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the non-alternative parents were: amount of attention given to individual students(7), enrichment and option programs(5), and discipline tactics(5).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the alternative parents were: amount of attention given

to individual students(13) and development of student's self-worth(12).

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by educators were: enrichment and option programs(3), school management and administration(2), and amount of attention given to individual students(2).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the non-alternative parents were: qualified teachers(17), teacher commitment(12), and academic standards(11).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the alternative parents were: facilities and equipment(15), school management and administration(8), and financial support(7).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the educators were: teacher qualifications(3) and school management and administration(2).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study the characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the non-alternative parents were: financial support(9), amount of attention given to individual students(9), relations and communication between home and school(9), community involvement in school

activities(9), and emphasis on "the basics"(9).

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the alternative parents were: amount of attention given to individual students(16) and development of student's self-worth(13).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the educators were: financial support(3), facilities and equipment(2), relations and communication between home and school(2), and development of student's self-worth(2).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by non-alternative parents from both schools were:[4] facilities and equipment(22), school management and administration(12), financial support(12), qualified teachers(10), emphasis on "the basics"(8), academic standards(6), and enrichment and options(3).
- The 10 characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by alternative parents from both schools were: qualified teachers(26), academic standards(17), teacher commitment(16), realtions and communication between home and school(11), facilities and equipment(10), development of

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[4] Owing to the nature of this question, it was deemed unnecessary to restrict comparisons between the schools to common Grade levels.

student's self-worth(7), school management and administration(6), financial support(5), enrichment and option programs(5), and student attendance(4).

- The 10 characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by non-alternative parents from both schools were: amount of attention given to individual students(16), enrichment and option programs(13), discipline tactics(12), facilities and equipment(12), relations and communication between home and school(12), emphasis on "the basics"(12), financial support(11), community involvement in school activities(11), development of student's self-worth(9), and teacher commitment(8).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by alternative parents from both schools were: amount of attention given to individual students(29), development of student's self-worth(25), discipline tactics(14), teacher commitment(9), enrichment and option programs(6), financial support(5), and qualified teachers(4).

TABLE 17. PARENT AND EDUCATOR RANKING OF GOALS OF EDUCATION - WALDORF-PARKALLEN.

RESPONDENTS	KINDERGARTEN PARENTS		GRADE 1 PARENTS		GRADE 2 PARENTS		TEACHERS		PRINCIPAL
GOALS	W (n=5)	P (n=4)	W (n=8)	P (n=4)	W (n=8)	P (n=6)	W n=3	P (n=1)	(n=1)
INTELLECTUAL	2.6*(3)**	1.25(1)	2.75(3)	2 (2)	1.6 (2)	1.8 (2)	(2)	(3)	1
SOCIAL	2.4 (2)	3.25(3)	2.38(2)	2.75(3)	2.78(3)	3 (3)	(3)	(2)	3
PERSONAL	1.21(1)	2 (2)	1.13(1)	1.5 (1)	1.5 (1)	1.3 (1)	(1)	(1)	2
VOCATIONAL	3.8 (4)	3.5 (4)	3.75(4)	3.75(4)	4 (4)	3.8 (4)	(4)	(4)	4

* unbracketed numbers represent average rankings

** bracketed numbers represent average rank orders

TABLE 18. PARENT AND EDUCATOR RANKING OF GOALS OF EDUCATION - CARAWAY-GARNEAU.

RESPONDENTS	GRADES 1 & 2 PARENTS		GRADES 3 & 4 PARENTS		GRADES 5 & 6 PARENTS		TEACHERS		PRINCIPAL
GOALS	C (n=10)	G (n=10)	C (n=11)	G (n=13)	C (n=6)	G (n=7)	C n=3	G (n=1)	(n=1)
INTELLECTUAL	2.0*(2)**	1.5 (1)	2.7 (3)	2.0 (2)	2 (2)	2.3 (3)	(2)	1	3
SOCIAL	2.6 (3)	2.5 (3)	2.4 (2)	2.77(3)	2.7 (3)	2.1 (2)	(3)	3	1
PERSONAL	1.4 (1)	2.4 (2)	1.5 (1)	1.7 (1)	1.5 (1)	2.1 (1)	(1)	2	2
VOCATIONAL	4.0 (4)	3.6 (4)	3.9 (4)	3.8 (4)	3.8 (4)	3.1 (4)	(4)	4	4

* unbracketed numbers represent average rankings

** bracketed numbers represent average rank orders

Ranking Goals of Schooling

(See Tables 17&18)

WALDORF-PARKALLEN RESULTS

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the non-alternative parents (K.- 2) overall average ranking of the goals of schooling was as follows:
  1. personal (individual) development
  2. intellectual development
  3. social (group) development
  4. vocational development.
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the alternative parents(K - 2) overall average ranking of the goals of schooling was the same as that of the non-alternative parents.
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Grade 2 alernative and non-alternative parents were most alike in their rankings of goals of schooling; the Kindergarten alternative and non-alternative parents were the least alike in their rankings of goals of schooling.

CARAWAY-GARNEAU RESULTS

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the non-alternative parents (Grades 1 - 6) overall average ranking for the goals of schooling was as follows:
  1. intellectual development
  2. personal (individual) development
  3. social (group) development

4. vocational development.

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the alternative parents (Grades 1 - 6) overall average ranking for the goals of schooling was as follows:

  1. personal (individual) development
  2. intellectual development
  3. social (group) development
  4. vocational development.

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, at each Grade level, the alternative parents show a greater consistency in their average ranking of goals of schooling than do the non-alternative parents.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- In both schools, parents and educators consistently ranked vocational development as the least important goal of schooling(4th).
- In both schools, the Grade 1 and 2 alternative parents overall average rankings were the same.
- In both schools, the overall average rankings of the alternative and non-alternative parent groups was different than either the teachers average rankings or that of the principals.
- The Garneau principal ranked the goals of schooling as follows:

  1. social (group) development
  2. personal (individual) development
  3. intellectual development

4. vocational development.

* The Parkallen principal reversed the first and third goals in her ranking of the goals of schooling.

C. Interview Results

These results have been taken from 36 interviews conducted during the course of the research. Nine interviews were conducted with parents of children in each program at each of the two schools studied. A summary of the trends which emerged during the interviews is given in the discussion of responses to interview Question 10. One complete interview from each of the four programs studied is included in Appendix 3.

The author recognizes that his interpretations of the interview data are based on his own individual experiences as a teacher and a being-in-the-world. However, interpretations of individual parent responses to the interview questions can give insight into the personal opinions of parents of both regular and alternative school children. Parents are described as subjects in a study rather than as objects of a study. These results are, therefore, an interpretation of how parents make sense of both the education their children are receiving and the school structure in which this occurs. It is within this context that these interview results are presented.

Questions 1 and 2 asked parent administrative details of their children's age, grade, sex and time spent at school.

Question 3: Why are you sending your child to this school? Why did you choose this school?

Parents from both alternative and non-alternative schools expressed dissatisfaction with other regular public schools with which they had been associated.

Parents of children at the regular (non-alternative) schools gave four main reasons for their choice of schools. They were:

1. It was located close to home; that is, it was "the neighbourhood school".
2. Dissatisfaction with one regular public school had led parents to enroll their child(ren) in another, because it "was better". They wanted a "more structured program", "stricter teachers", "more homework" or "higher academic standards" than they perceived the previous school was offering. For example Parkallen Parent 10 stated:

   > We were primarily interested in a more structured school...my husband met some people through work and they recommended this area. They felt the district had higher academic standards than any other district.
   > Because it's in the neighborhood, but the only reason I moved into the neighborhood is because I despised what was happening in the other school.

3. It provided a structured learning environment. Parents used the words "structure", "normalizing" and "achievement" in describing this.
4. Four parents had their children enrolled in the regular

program while they waited to have them admitted to the alternative program(Caraway).

Parents of children at alternative schools gave two main reasons for their choice:1. In reaction to what they perceived were negative aspects of the regular public school system.

2. Because of the positive aspects of the alternative school.

In describing their negative reactions to the regular public schools, alternative parents expressed the idea that in a large system, the system and its structure are seen as more important than the individual, "The individual is to fit into the system." One parent described the regular system as "alright for the average student" but asked "what about the student who doesn't fit the mold?". She further suggested that Caraway regarded individuals as more important than the system. Alternative parents also cited instances where children with problems were treated as abnormal and described as not fitting in. In the Waldorf study, Parent 3 described the regular public school as "information-centered" as compared to the Waldorf program which was "child-centered".

Waldorf Parent 2 expressed her dissatisfaction with a regular public school as follows:

> In the public school for the two years that she went there they didn't do anything. I never got any satisfaction out of the public school whatsoever. She withdrew completely into a little shell. She just sat there. She never participated in the class

> whatsoever. We thought we had a dumb child on our hands.
> (Interviewer: This was emphasized at your school - that your child was intellectually low?)
> They didn't come right out and say she was dumb, but at the end of two years she couldn't read. When we had a tutor for Grade One, during the two hours the tutor was there she learned more than she ever learned in Grade One. The teacher told me that she was only in her fourth month of Grade One at the end of the school term. When I said I was going to put X into the alternative the second year, the teacher told me I should stick her in a special school for slow children, that X would never be able to handle the French and German and other things that she would get at Waldorf. I guess, in other words, they were telling me she was stupid.

After one year at Waldorf:

> I can honestly say this is her first year of school. Our daughter even had a lousy Kindergarten teacher. With X, before she went to Waldorf, we couldn't get her to learn at home. Now, since Waldorf, when we work with her at home, she displays an entirely different attitude. We are not having to fight with her.

Waldorf Parent 5 stated:

> He was not happy at all in the regular school. One signifigant thing was that all the time he went to school, he painted nothing but "black". Since he has been at Waldorf he is using colors. I think that is incredible that something else looks better to him.

The following descriptions were given by alternative parents as negative aspects of the regular public school system;

1. stifled creativity
2. teacher disinterest
3. rate of learning
4. loss of self
5. pressure to achieve
6. too structured

7. no parent participation

Some of the positive aspects of the alternative system were described by alternative school parents as:

1. development of self
2. teacher commitment
3. supporting home values
4. parent participation
5. emphasized individuality
6. development of independence
7. lack of competition

These responses are in agreement with the questionnaire responses (See Appendix 4: Strengths and Weaknesses).

Question 4: What are the differences between the regular and alternative programs at your school?

Parents at the regular schools either did not know about the regular alternative program in their school or described it in both positive and negative terms. The regular program was generally described in negative terms by alternative school parents. The alternative programs were described in positive terms by 4 Garneau parents and 1 Parkallen parent.

Parents at both alternative schools described a difference between the alternative and non-alternative programs using the word "individual". At Caraway, parental involvement was described as a main difference. At Waldorf, parents described the development of creativity as a main difference.

Five of the nine Garneau parents did not know about the Caraway program and four were on the waiting list for an alternative school opening. The former group used the words "unstructured", "no structure", "undisciplined" and "open classroom" in their general description of Caraway. Parents on the waiting list described the regular program in terms of: "no parental involvement at the school or in the classroom", "students don't work at their own pace", "no self expression", "independence is not developed", "not as creative" and "suppression resulting in alienation".

Garneau Parent 6 related the terms "interest" and "curriculum" in describing a difference between regular and alternative programs:

> Well I don't always think that the material is boring, it's the way it's presented. My sister's got a little girl in Caraway and she was just telling me this and I think it sort of illustrates it quite well. Last year when her little brother was in Grade Three, all the kids in the class got really interested in the universe you know, the solar system, and I don't think that is in the curriculum until Grade Seven but their teacher said great, the kids are really interested and she let them go ahead with it and learn about it and the kids were really excited and she really encouraged them...
> Normally if the kids would have been interested in a certain type of thing the teacher wouldn't teach it if it wasn't in the curriculum, so rather than stimulate their interest in something they're already interested in they sort of said well wait, you're not supposed to be interested in that right now. I find in Caraway they encourage it and also I think they let the children go about learning something in more their own way. I think children are naturally very curious and want to know. I think it often tends to stifle that in children, that wanting to know and that wanting to learn, certainly they don't stimulate it.

Caraway Parent 7 described the regular school program as "inflexible". This meant to him that the program focused on the "subject" rather than the "individual":

> Yes, and the methods that they use are just so inflexible, I mean, what fits one fits all, according to a regular classroom generally, and I certainly know that all regular classrooms aren't that way, but ours was. From our own experience, every child in Grade One did exactly the same workbooks as every other child in the room. I know that children went into that classroom being able to read and yet they went through all the reading readiness exercises, and books and workbooks and whatever. That seems unreasonable to me.
> ...I mean if a child is not finished a particular project then it seems that they should be able to finish it. But in a regular program they don't, they cut it off and go on to the next things, and again I realize that this doesn't happen in every classroom with every teacher.

Parent 10 (a teacher) contrasted the regular and alternative programs at Waldorf-Parkallen using the words "conformity", "rules" and "self-concept" in reference to a "caring" environment:

> I am a teacher now and I really see what the differences are and they are consistent, real caring for the children, parental involvement, and some teachers don't allow parents in at all. Independence and creativity. Some teachers don't allow any deviation from whatever they want to teach, I mean it can be anything and they don't allow any sort of deviation at all. Sort of a whole child development, a total development aspect.
> (Interviewer: So the regular program is dealing largely with what?)
> Academics and sometimes its not even academics, it just seems like streaming, like rules, like following rules. I'm not even sure children learn so much academically as they learn to follow rules or maybe learn not to follow rules, I'm not sure. I feel the children in Caraway, certainly my children anyway, are learning to be people, they aren't learning to conform to the rules of society. That doesn't mean I don't want them to conform, because I think they have to learn the rules and what's

> appropriate, but its never at the sake of their own self-concept or identity.

Only three regular parents described differences between the regular and alternative programs at Waldorf-Parkallen. Parkallen Parent 1 described the alternative as "existing only in the elementary Grades" and "emphasizing creativity and the arts more than the academics". Parkallen Parent 4 described the alternative program positively but was not committed to the program:

> I don't know a lot about the Waldorf system. I think there is the concept of having the same teacher for the full eight years and when you think about that, it could be good and it could be bad depending upon what kind of relationship your child had with the teacher. Too, I wasn't willing to make a commitment to being here for eight years and unless you could make that commitment... it loses some of the point. That is not the only thing that is different. Some of their concepts about trying to encourage the children to be creative etc., more than the regular classes do. That is a positive thing but I am not sure if it is actually happening. It is difficult to answer that question without having sat in on the program and really seen it.

The Waldorf parents interviewed described differences positively in terms of what was occuring in the alternative program and negatively in terms of what was not occuring in the regular program. Waldorf was described as developing creativity in the arts and music, giving meaning to what is learned at school, treating the individual as important and teaching the whole child.

Specifically, Waldorf Parents 3 used the following terms to describe the regular system (see Appendix 3): "computer-like", "mechanistic", "information-centered", "lack of commonality among staff", "no unifying ideal", and fostering "estrangement".

Waldorf Parent 4 stated:

> I think it could be very simply summed up by stressing that Waldorf stresses cooperation rather than competition.

Waldorf Parent 5 described a difference in terms of developing the mind:

> I think one very basic difference - and I know this from having gone through the public schools and from a friend with a child going to a public school - there is no great stress put on the development of the mind. They are given handouts, fill-in-the-blanks, cut things out and put them in the proper blanks. To me, things like that are great fun and nice little exercises, but they don't lead to anything. Once they are done, there is no stimulation to go beyond that. At Waldorf, the children are never given handouts or mimeographed sheets. They write their own things.

The term "structure" was frequently used by parents during the interviews. The author interpreted this to mean an externally applied imposition on the teacher-student interaction. This imposition was in terms of an organizational system within which the students and teachers operate. Parent and teacher control of classroom structure was described as a major difference between regular and alternative classrooms. This is in agreement with Anglin(1979) who stated that:

> The role of a classroom teacher is operationally defined by the organizational system in which the teacher functions.

The alternative school structure was described as being more under teacher and parent control than the regular school. Structure was viewed more as being created in the alternative classroom rather than imposed, as in the regular public school classroom. The alternative structure as described by parents was directed more towards a mutual-causal (mutualist) paradigm while the regular school structure functioned under a one-way causal (hierarchist) paradigm(Maruyama, 1974).

An answer to the question - Are alternative schools really different? - emerged in the responses to Question 4. Two sources of parent opinion supported the belief that alternative schools are different:

1. Parents of children who were now or had been in the regular public school classrooms.
2. Parent descriptions of the effects on Caraway as a result of joining the public school system.

It is recognized that further classroom observations and teacher interviews would have to be conducted in order to determine whether or not parental opinion reflects actual differences.

Using the terms "structure" and "personal relationships", Caraway Parent 9 described a difference for her daughter entering Caraway:

> I think we first started looking for an alternative school when our seven year old was not really happy in Kindergarten. She was in a really structured Kindergarten and she was very mad most of the time. They went through separate procedures and she was expected to follow them and she wouldn't because some of them she said were stupid and some of them she said were just too hard, and there never seemed to be anything done about her attitude which was getting worse and worse, you know, she was mad and grouchy all the time. We didn't know that Caraway

> was in Edmonton, we didn't know that they had an alternative. We talked to the teachers, it just seemed that it had the flexibility that would take account of X's particular problem. It seemed that it would be a kind of a flexible thing, that whatever her problem was would be taken into account if in fact she was resisting some things that were happening in Kindergarten for a logical reason...
>
> The other reason, our eight year old child, she's a much different kind of child than our first one, and we really felt that she needed a lot of things that Caraway does for, you know, personal relations, interpersonal relationships. She needed more personal relationships than her school seemed to be giving her.

Waldorf Parent 1 described a difference in Waldorf graduates:

> The average Waldorf graduate will be different from the average graduate of the ordinary system. I think he or she will be a lot more sensitive to other people, have a little different outlook on life, just from the approach that has been used. They don't have to win, not that they don't have to suceed. You can suceed and not necessarily always be first.

Caraway Parent 7 described a difference in the school using the term "structure" in the sense of an imposed restriction:

> One of the reasons that it's occurring, in my opinion, is that the Caraway teachers teach, they need the time, they don't get any other kinds of time than a regular classroom teacher, so if they don't use the music teacher and they don't use the librarian then they have no time for prep, they have no time for anything, and they would need it more than an average teacher would need it I would think. So really the school board hasn't accommodated the program at all in that respect. So in a sense, in one sense, we're kind of forced to become more structured...

Caraway Parent 6 related the word structure to "sense of community" and "formalism" in describing some effects of Caraway joining the public school system:

> We lost, because we moved into more structure we became more structured and we lost a lot of that family casualness and familiarity that we had in the old place. So we lost the autonomy that we had to run our classrooms the way we wanted to, just because of the fact of being in a structured school.

These two sources of parental opinion thus strongly indicate that real differences exist between the alternatives and the regular public schools.

Question 5: What things do you most value about your child's education?

Both regular and alternative parents described two things they most valued about their child's education: the development of basic skills and the emotional development of their children. For example, regular Parent 10 first described the importance of reading and then how the child felt:

> Well I would like my child to have the idea that learning never stops. That its not just the end of Grade Six and that I've learned just that, you know, these are the exciting things that I've learned this year and next year I'm going to be learning more exciting things and I hope forever, that sort of thing. My major concern was that she read. I really feel that everything else falls into place if she reads, which she does, and she reads a lot and is encouraged in the school to read a lot. That was my major thing. Mathematics - I didn't expect that she would have any trouble with. I really didn't expect her to falter in anything but reading perhaps and I was concerned about reading. Those are the curriculum kinds of things, but I'm of course more intensely involved with how she learns to feel about herself too. I think that's the beginning of my first point, you know, if you start to feel that you can do things.

As in the above example, regular school parents usually gave development of basic skills as their first point and then described the importance of how the child felt about himself. This order was usually reversed by alternative school parents. Specifically, Parkallen school parents described three major educational areas which they valued:

1. to functionally earn a living or get a job
2. to be interested in or to choose working in an area
3. to develop independence.

One parent described the first point:

> What they learned out of it as they learn something towards their, what they're going to become of themselves, if they want to become a teacher or whatever, but something that will help them earn their own living when they get older.

Parent 3 described interest as important in terms of "being interested in school". Parent 10 first described "the basics" and secondly "interest":

> The fact that he gets the basics - spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic, that sort of thing. The approach to math this year was unfamiliar to me... So that he has an interest in every field and when he does have a choice to choose such areas, he'll know what he's really interested in.

Four Garneau parents valued independent thought. For example:

> That's really difficult to pinpoint. Mostly being able to think independently is what I hope. In fact, I don't think they are into that at all, period. The school system is designed to discourage anything like independent thought as far as I am concerned.

This regular parent continued to describe a desire for an "independence from authority" and did not think that regular public schools were developing this in her children. She expressed a sense of resignation with the phrase "That's the way the system is".

Underlying these three points, regular parents expressed a sense of the importance of their children being treated as individuals. They expressed the hope that their children could see themselves as "able to achieve", have a "positive attitude" and "enjoy learning". Parent 7 described it thus:

> I think the one thing that I would value most in their education would be their ability to learn on their own and be able to read well enough to learn well enough on their own and have developed enough skills to continue.
> (Interviewer: Develop skills to continue with learning?)
> With learning and being able to, to be well rounded and be able to learn, have the skills to be able to pursue things they want to learn on their own should they need to. I have a lot of personal opinions about education but I think basically that I would like to see more individuality put on bringing out a child's strong points. I think that in the general school, in the public schools or any schools really that I've had experience with that they have not stressed any strong points in a child and have more or less just tried to give them a basic education and I think a lot of children never discover their strong points because of that as people. Everyone's an individual and I believe that some children excell in certain areas and others don't. They're kind of all made to believe that they all have to fit this general mold, rather than being individualistic. Everyone has strong points so it's being able to identify it and encourage the child to develop it, whether its music, reading, mathematics, or artistically talented, you know, any of those things. I really believe that children should develop their strong points more than they do. I don't believe that it's done. I don't think that they consciously don't do it, I just think that it's not done.

Alternative parents generally placed the learning of basic skills secondary to the development of their children emotionally. They used the words "self-esteem", "acceptance of other people", "self-concept", "self-confidence" and "independence" in initially describing what they most valued about their children's education. If self-esteem was supported at school, they felt that the learning of basic academic skills would follow. Alternative parents consistently stated this point.

The regular public schools were labelled as "information-centered" while Waldorf was labelled "child-centered" by Waldorf Parent 3. Parent 6 stated that Caraway develops "all levels of stability", and it meets the security needs of children by developing "self-worth" and "confidence". She stated that in such an environment, academic skill development would be facilitated. Waldorf Parent 9 stated that if her child developed a "sense of achievement" then academics would "eventually come". Caraway Parent 4 stated that she "didn't want a little academic developed in Kindergarten" and that her child's "sense of self was more important".

In the two alternative programs, the alternative parents differed in their views of how their children should develop emotionally.

One Caraway parent described the school as an extension of the family which has values similar to those at home and develops self-esteem:

> Well, one of my needs is that X sees the variety of family relationships that exist with the parents coming in, she sees that some kids live with their mom, some kids live with their dad, some kids live with their mom and dad. Those people are valued people by all the children in the classroom. Everybody is special and everybody has something

> special about them and because I work with adults who are unhappy, I want to make sure that these things are incorporated into her daily learnings. As far as her needs go, one of her major needs as far as I was concerned was that she be part of a larger family group, that there be a lot of support for learning and excitement about learning because we had to do some backtracking for her because she was turned off in Kindergarten and its been restimulated, that her curiosity be kept up and the pace at which she worked is not externally placed but rather an internal sort of thing. That her self-esteem is always given opportunity to get some more strokes and I see that all the time. Those kids are just so positive with one another. She's able to see that I'm interested in her education. That seems to have enhanced our relationship. You know - my mom's coming to school today, this is my mom. When she talks to me about the kids in her room, I know instantly who she's talking about and that's been pretty significant I think, versus a regular school system where I wouldn't know the children or the parents. One of the things thats helpful of course in Caraway, is that most of the parents have similar values in regards to what they want as an educational process for their children. Their life styles, although they may differ on the surface, in terms of belief about people, I think that's the same. Whereas, in a regular classroom you're going to get people who think child abuse is quite alright, who think that children should be seen and not heard, who batter the hell out of their kids in terms of self-esteem and those kids then go to the classroom and act that out and you know the implications that has for a child's education.

In contrast to the Caraway parents, the Waldorf parents described a different educational value - a moral/spiritual one. For example, Waldorf Parent 3 describes through analogy the lack of moral guidance in regular public schools:

> I don't think that they have been all that sucessful in coming up with answers because the malaise goes so deep. Let me use an analogy which I think is quite effective in getting to my point.
> If the First Amendment, shall we say, in the United States not only included religion but included music Congress shall make no laws regarding the establishment of music in any form. So it was then decided that because this was out of place, outside of the political system, and education was inside

> it, then music could not be taught in schools. Right? You might allow private schools in which music would be taught. You could extend the analogy to talk about professional schools in which Beethoven's music would be taught, or only a certain element of music of Bach would be taught, or something like this, but in the public schools there would be no music - and you can imagine the situation arising that after graduation the children who were taught without the experience of music would fall very quickly into the thrall of any person who offered them a musical cult. They would have a vacuum in their lives of the same sort that is presently now in the area of spiritual guidance.

Only one regular parent described guidance as educationally important. Guidance given at home did not have to match that given at school. Parent 1:

> Well, I really think that the school should help them morally as well. I don't know if this applies to this question, but I feel that the more people they have giving them guidance, the better off they will be.

The emotional state of their children was frequently used by both regular and alternative parents as an evaluation criteria of the school. For example regular Parent 4,(who also reversed the usual order of basic skills followed by self- development) stated:

> It is really important that the child have a positive attitude towards his school and what happens at school. I don't like it if my kids are opposed and not happy to be going to school. I think that is a fairly good judgement of what is happening in the school classroom - if your child is content.
> (Interviewer: If your child is happy at school, then this is one of the important things?)
> It tends to indicate that there are not too many problems for him, that there is a good relationship with the teacher, that he is not having a tremendous amount of difficulty coping with the work, at his level.
> (Interviewer: Is there anything specific you would like your child to be having from school?)
> Just a positive learning environment as he learns the basic things, the skills he needs to keep

developing and broadening his perspectives.

Alternative Waldorf Parents 4 and 6 stated that it was important that their children be happy and enjoy learning:

> That he enjoy it, that he learn to think rather than memorize facts. This is very much stressed in the Waldorf system.
>
> I want him to learn academics when he is ready, but the main thing that he be happy with it.

Question 6: What role does the school play in developing these things?

Three trends emerged in parental responses to question 6: the importance of the teacher, individual versus group relationships, and a sense of community. Parents described interrelationships between these major trends.

Firstly, the teacher was labelled as the most important factor in the child's education. Regular school parents saw chance as playing a major role in determining who their child had as a teacher. Alternative school parents saw who their child's teacher was as less due to chance and more controlled.

Both regular and alternative parents cited examples of "good teachers" and "bad teachers" in responding to this question.

Garneau Parent 2 (a teacher), described her perceptions of the role the teacher plays in the structure of the school system using the term "myth": She described a separate school reality with the label "mythical".

> I think the teacher, the teacher is always the key. It's who is teaching and the kind of relationships that they have with my kid. It mostly makes the difference I think, and the attitude the teacher has. Kids are smart, you know, they aren't fooled at all. In one instance with my daughter it was intensely negative, in the second incident which is now occuring at Garneau, it's positive and I teach my academic students some of the time at Senior High school and I would guess that in their cases the ones who are having trouble maybe or who don't fit into the mold, that it is really a negative thing. I think that they have just been closed down on. (Interviewer: Students who don't fit the mold, what does that mean?)
> Well, you of course know that our whole system is structured that a kid of six, or five now I suppose, goes into Kindergarten, starts at that age and finishes when they're eighteen and the myth is that every kid is going to learn at the same rate and be socialized at the same rate and everybody turns into a great mush of pudding, and heads on over to the rest of their life.

Garneau Parent 10 described the quality of the teacher as the determining factor in her choice of a regular school:

> I don't know what they do really but I hope that they do things that involve all the children, not just one, you know, teacher-child, child-child and group sports. They do a lot of sports. I know classes play against each other. I didn't really see the curriculum skills before X went to this school. I just assumed that they were professionals, you know. I don't expect it to be substandard. I expect it to be average. Well, actually when I did send him to Garneau, people said well it's in the university area, maybe he'll have a better quality teacher.

One Waldorf parent's expectations were based on both a non-competitive approach and teacher quality:

> The kind of thing I see Waldorf doing is developing an attachment between the teacher and the class that extends beyond the teacher just doing the job sort of thing and getting the class average to a certain level. It is far beyond that and, as I say, I am not an educator. The approach seems to be one where they are not really emphasizing competition, i.e., can student A do something student B cannot? It is almost each student being encouraged to do their best as compared to what they can do in cut-throat

> competition which is being used, I think, without too much success in the public school system. What have you accomplished if you are a mediocre person?

Alternative school parents described the role of the teacher in creating an environment frequently labelled "child-centered". At Caraway, parental involvement was described as playing a major role in developing this environment. Another factor was that teachers and families were selected for Caraway which resulted in commitment to the alternative program. At Waldorf, the creation of a child-centered environment at school was more frequently described as due to the teacher's pedagogy. Parental commitment to the program (8 years) was also mentioned as a factor at Waldorf.

The responses to Question 6 also described a sense of individuality. Both regular and alternative parents wanted their children to be treated as individuals, not as part of a group of students. Regular Garneau Parent 3 characterized the regular public school system with the label "disinterested":

> I found that the schools were disinterested. They didn't care if he was lazy, he had to keep up with the other kids. He makes up his own rules in arithmetic, everything. If he doesn't know a rule, he makes up his own and they just let it go at that, whereas, now his teachers try and straighten that out. You know, you can't make up your own rules in math.
> (Interviewer: Because the other schools weren't interested in your child personally, something important was lost?)
> Exactly, yes. They were too interested in one other aspect...they were more interested that he should be one of a number, instead of an individual.

Garneau Parent 10 (a teacher) described the importance of a personal caring teacher-student interaction:

> It just seems to me that more and more in society today children need more help and since they're at school for such a long time, they're going to have to get some of it there. I don't see the school as an academic institution only, I try to see it, certainly the way I teach, as a whole-person institution, but you know, I don't think that that's a widely held opinion. Teaching is a job, you know, we're asking people to be dedicated. The whole thing of a job is that it's a part of your life and you can't be giving one part of your life so much more away and you may in fact have a home and a family and so it's too wearing, and you say OK this is my job and I can give it this much, and the other thing is that I don't think people are trained, are taught to be caring, giving people. I don't think teachers are taught, you know, they are taught to teach the subject not the child, so you know, if they cover the curriculum, they don't care whether the child comes out happy or near wholesome. They care if he comes out with B's or C's.
> (Interviewer: What's the key in your children's education?)
> It's the caring.

In terms of the second and third trends, Caraway Parent 7 related individual growth to a sense of community:

> At Caraway, certainly a lot of what they learn, a lot of the ways that they learn, have to do with their own interests. The topic is chosen by them because it's interesting to them, and then they learn the basic skills or whatever they need from that. There's a lot of choice in Caraway too, like children are even allowed to be unreasonable and that's a part of life as far as I am concerned. If a child one day just absolutely says that he doesn't want to do something, and even if it seems like a reasonable thing, he's allowed to choose that day not to do it. I feel that adults do that all the time and won't allow children to do it and I don't think it's fair.
> It's like being at home. You know that seems to us like a good way for kids to view education. It makes them think that what they do at home is important, what they do at school is important and everybody agrees. The school agrees with the home and the home agrees with the school and it makes sense to their

family.

Parents of children at both schools related the sense of community to a personal interaction between parents, teachers and students. In one example, Parkallen Parent 10 specifically moved to that area because of the community school. Many alternative parents described the school as an extension of their home and of home values (see above). Regular parents more frequently viewed the school functionally - as a place to learn what life is like, to prepare children to earn a living or to teach basic skills (see Question 3).

Caraway Parent 7 described a sense of community in terms of feeling free to enter a classroom and as an extension of home values:

> I feel I can walk into Caraway anytime and I'm appreciated and welcomed...and that feeling certainly doesn't exist in our public school here. You know, you can feel free to sit down with a kid and read or do whatever as long as you're not interfering with the program or the teacher, but sort of to have the school open to us is really important.

To Caraway Parent 5:

> It meets my needs in that it is a very close community and I come from a very close community. I feel it is essential to know the people who are educating your child and to feel as if they are your friends also, that it is not going to make any difference if you go in ranting and raving - because it doesn't. It doesn't make any difference in the way the teacher relates to the child. I find it is essential that there is a really good rapport there.

The major factor described in developing this sense of community in the school was size.

> (Interviewer: Do you see Waldorf as being more supportive in terms of what you are trying to do at home?)
> Yes. It is a very small school and I think that is one of the reasons it can be that way so much I think. There is a lot of interaction between the parent and the teacher - at least in my case, and I am sure in others. I have no difficulty in going to the teacher if I have a problem. In fact, I have gone.

Parkallen Parent 1 described the importance of a personal relationship to her child's achievement and attributed this to small class sizes(see Appendix 3):

> They receive more individual attention which I think they have to have, especially when a child might be a little bit below average, I think they have to have individual attention, and in a big classroom a teacher just can't do that, and there is more chance for rebelling because they are not getting the attention they need

Question 7: In what way does this school meet your needs, and your child's needs - specifically? Has this school met your needs?

Descriptions of personal and impersonal relationships occurred throughout parental responses to Question 7. Parents usually described their children's school positively in comparison to other regular public schools. Regular parents were less committed in the support of their school than were alternative parents. This is in agreement with the Questionnaire results, where, on the average, regular parents did not rate school characteristics as highly as did alternative school parents. Seven of the nine Garneau parents interviewed answered "No", the school hadn't met their needs. Creativity, independence, problem solving and encouragement were some of the things described as not being developed in the regular public schools. One regular parent described a personal student-teacher relationship at Garneau and compared it to an impersonal relationship which her son experienced at another regular public school:

> I can give you an example. Last year X failed and the youngest one, Y, he was in Grade One and he did very bad, very bad. In this school this year, they dug in to see why the youngest one, Y, was doing so bad. They did tests, they did brain scans, they did I.Q. tests, they dug in. With X they gave him a choice: either pull up your socks and get to work or you're going to have to go to another school next year.
>
> Last year, they did their job and that was it, You know, they're not going any deeper. The one in Grade Two, Y, when they assessed him in October, he was at Grade One level and they assessed him in May and he's at Grade 3 level now.
> (Interviewer: Why do you think that improved?)
> They went after him personally. They took care of his personal needs. She recognized things in him like he prints his letters backwards, he has a problem so she's teaching him to write instead and she knows his nine is backwards, she knows it's the right answer even if it is his backwards nine.
> (Interviewer: Was the One in Grade Two assessed in Grade one?)
> No, he was passed into Grade Two. Then when he went to Garneau, they noticed that he writes his letters backwards so you read them in a mirror, and he switched hands, left and right handed.
> (Interviewer: Do you attribute the reason this was not assessed in Grade One, say, because of personal interest, is that the main reason?)
> Exactly, the reason I believe that she took a personal interest she just didn't put Y off as being backwards or slow, she recognized that there was a great deal of intelligence. There he was not coming out like a standard, the way they figure all the group should be.
> (Interviewer: Do you think that he would have mastered it if he had continued on in the school that he was previously in?)
> No, I don't think so.
> You see I've gone through this all before. I have an older one, fifteen, and he went through the same thing and it was ignored until it was too late, until the pattern was set.

Alternative parents generally stated that the regular public school did not meet their needs, but that the alternative did:

> Yes, I probably have a better advantage than most parents in that I, at that time, had a job that took me into schools and saw a lot of dead kids, a lot of turned-off kids, a lot of kids who, to me in their questioning of me when I was going to speak with them, appeared very bright but had obviously been turned off by the system, and when I was seeing this in Grades Three and Four, it said that the school system is not meeting the needs of the children. It's there to meet the needs of the people in the school system.

Alternative parents described the school as meeting their needs in two general areas - it acted as an extended community and gave individual attention to the children(See parent comments: Question 6).

A sense of community was more frequently expressed by Caraway parents than Waldorf parents. Treating the child as an individual was the latter groups' most frequent description.

Caraway parents used the following terms in describing this need and how it was met: "extension of family", "parents have similar values as the teachers", "home values are met", "similar to home values", "caring", "community environment", and, "home and school values are similar".

Waldorf parents used the following terms: "individual attention", "total child", "flexible", "self-confidence", "positive attitude", "own interests", "individual", and "whole person".

These labels reflect a 'we' perspective (emic) in which parents perceive both themselves and the teacher to be working together towards the same values. The regular parents more frequently described a 'they' perspective (edic) in which teachers and the school were viewed as outsiders.

Related to this, a need in terms of evaluation emerged in the responses to Question 7. Garneau Parent 10 expressed a frustration with report cards which had little real meaning to her:

> I had very little contact with the school except at report card time and the first time we checked a problem with the new report card format. The teacher didn't even understand it. There was a misunderstanding with the whole report card.
> We went in to see her once and she was vague. She suggested a few things but we didn't really feel that there was a lot of communication...
> I really didn't get involved.

Alternative Parent 1 compared her participiction in the classroom with a report card evaluation:

> In terms of meeting my needs, I know all the children in X's classroom, I know most all of the parents and the children know me. I've participated in the classroom. I'm there every Friday at noon and I see what's going on. I'm also there sometimes for a half day at a time and can actively see how X and the other children are learning and interrelating. It's not something I get on a three times a year report card.
> It's very personal, like I still have the interview with the teacher two or three times a year, but it almost seems like it's not necessary, it's after a fact and I feel like most of the things she's telling me I already know, versus people who go through the regular school system who don't find out until six months into the year that Johnnie's failing in math because they haven't been encouraged to participate in the classroom. They don't feel like they're a part of their education and that is

the most important thing to me.

Question 8: In your opinion, how does the general public school system differ from your school?

Regular parents responded to Question 8 in one of four ways. The first type of response used the term "discipline". Parkallen Parent 1 compared discipline in the regular public system with that in the separate school system.

> The only really startling difference is... the discipline. I would be at the separate school quite often and I would never hear the children swearing or doing this or doing that, but at Parkallen, I don't know, I just can't believe the words that those kids use, and they seem to have no respect at all for anyone other than themselves. I am not saying all the kids, but there are really quite a few that really got out of hand, and I think that the problem is that they did this in the classes also. I don't think that the teacher phoned the parents, and I think that the parents should have been phoned each time that their child did something like talked back, and let the parents know so that maybe the parents could handle some of the discipline at home. But I don't think that the school gets in contact with the parents enough to let them know how the child is acting at the school. Until they get to the point, maybe where they are put out for a few days, but as far as discipline, I really don't think they have enough of it at Parkallen.

Student behavior was related to class size and the student-teacher interaction by the above parent and Garneau Parent 2.

Parkallen Parent 2 compared discipline today with his own schooling experience:

> I would only have to say that when I went to school, we had a little more control. I think maybe the discipline was a little more evident. Getting strapped for instance. You never hear of anyone getting strapped these days. I don't know whether they do it any more.

Garneau Parent 3 stated that in terms of discipline, there was "no connection with home life." Garneau Parent 9 described the general public system as "becoming a police force".

In the second type of response, the general public system was labelled "impersonal". Parkallen Parent 4 stated that "individuals are not taught according to their needs". Parent 3 stated that in the general public system the teachers were "bad". Garneau Parent 7 described the general public system as "catering to the average child", "no room except for the normal", "no room for individuality",

In the third type of response, parents described the school attended by their children as personal. Parent 6 (a teacher) stated that class sizes were smaller at Parkallen than in the general public school system. His son had been in a class of 38 at another school. "More individual attention" was now given to his son. The proximity to home and the stability of the community were other characteristics of Parkallen which were not found generally in the public school system. Parent 6 stated that it was important that "this sense of community be carried into the classroom".

The fourth type of response by regular parents was that they saw little difference between the school their children attended and the general public school system. To Parent 7, public schools were "pretty well basic all over". This same parent used the terms "strictness" and "discipline" as educational values in response to Question 5.

The alternative parents described four main differences in response to Question 8. These differences are interrelated.

Firstly, the teachers were described as committed in the alternative system and not as committed in the regular system. Getting a "good teacher" in the regular system was described as due to chance. To alternative Parent 4, the general public system "supports bad teachers." He described the general public system as "so massive that it could get away with rotten teachers".

Secondly, when the curricular focus moves from a student-teacher relationship (child-centered), to a student-subject relationship (information-centered), there is a loss of both personal interaction and sense of community in the classroom. Caraway Parent 5 stated that "parents expect too much in the regular school system" and she stated that the regular system taught "conformity, mass learning and false values" as compared to Caraway which taught "creativity, individual learning and thinking out on one's own". Caraway Parent 6 stated that Caraway was "cohesive," consistent with the child's own development and based on interest".

To Caraway Parent 2, a personal relationship with the teacher was a major difference:

> I don't think that I would have this kind of relationship with the teachers. I know them personally, see them socially, know what their lives are like, and that makes a big difference you know, they aren't strangers."

Waldorf Parent 1 compared his daughter's education in the regular public school to that of his son's at Waldorf:

> Again, within the system, my little girl has got two teachers this year who are doing exactly the same kinds of things with the kids in her classes as Waldorf is doing with my son's class. You see the same kind of things being developed, but unfortunately that is the exception in the regular system. That is not the norm. Two out of six years she had had teachers that did that. The other four years she has had a range of good to mediocre in terms of their ability to get kids to respond.

Alternative Parent 2 compared a restricted environment and curriculum in the general public school system with personal interactions at Waldorf:

> I am really discouraged. I think something really has to be done about public schools. They are terrible. At Waldorf they get a rug and sit on the floor. It is relaxed.
>
> I would like to see more alternative schools. They (regular schools) meet the average child's needs but they (regular schools) don't meet those needs of special children.

Thirdly, in the general public school system, the student was described as "there to learn the subjects". In the alternative, the student was described as there to grow socially and emotionally as well as intellectually. Caraway Parent 1 related this difference to teacher committment:

> The regular school system seems to have been built on the premise that you're there to learn things like reading, writing and arithmetic, you know, the three R's kind of thing.
>
> The teachers in a regular school system don't necessarily have to be committed to the same things that our Caraway teachers are committed to. They may be committed to math, the most important thing for

> them is that the kids know math, whether their parents are divorcing or their grandmother died yesterday. I don't care, they should have done their homework. The idea of children moving from teacher to teacher for different subjects rather than having one teacher who teaches almost everything cuts down on continuity, cuts down on a feeling of classroom community.

Alternative Parent 4 describes a wholistic concept:

> I think we have touched on that...the competition, the fragmentation. The general school system tends to be autocratic, domineering, stifling, creative of dependence, and the Waldorf school is none of these. They focus very much on a wholistic concept of education rather than the fragmentation in the normal public school.

Waldorf Parent 7 used the terms "memorization", "boring", "irrelevant", "impersonal" and "union-like" in describing the general public system. He described Waldorf as "helping children to think for themselves", which "allowed them to develop as independent individuals". The regular system was described as "totally different" where "children and teachers learn to do as they're told". Another alternative parent described the general public school system as "more rigid than Waldorf". In the regular school, teachers were described as "all important" whereas children were described as "all important" at Waldorf. Caraway Parent 7 described dialogue as an important distinction:

> Because of the different environment in the classroom, I think the kids interact a lot more, and they don't sit still and not talk all morning until recess and just socialize at recess, there is interaction between the kids all day, which I think is good.

Finally, in the alternative schools, discipline implied the development of self-discipline, where an attempt was made to understand the cause(See Appendix 3, Alternative A). In the regular system, discipline meant punishing deviant behavior without determining the cause. To alternative Parent 8, "what is acceptable and not acceptable" was determined by an authority figure in the regular school . system. However, rules at Caraway were self-developed rules, created through class discussion. She stated that, compared to regular schools, "intimidation, lack of acceptance, and loss of self-esteem" did not occur in the alternative. Garneau Parent 10 related behavior to caring:

> Rigid caring, and it's not to say that teachers aren't caring. I've really had a lot of experience with a lot of teachers who are really caring people, but a lot of it is caring with a provision in it you know, I'll care about you if you conform. They really don't care about the guys who are misbehaving and all that kind of stuff. I think you have to care for all the kids.

Question 9: Is your child happy at school?

The teacher was described by parents as the person most responsible for children's happiness in schools. Both the teacher and the school system were described as being responsible for children's unhappiness. Most regular parents cited examples of their children's unhappiness at other schools but generally agreed that their child was happy at the two regular schools studied.

Regular Parent 1 describes her daughter as average and happy, her son as above average and not happy. She uses the words "repetition", "boring", and "inflexible" in describing her son's school experience:

> X is basically quite happy in school. She has her days but everyone does. She has always been a little more happy but I think because school is more of a challenge to her than it is to Y. In classes she has to work a little harder. I think that too makes a difference, because Y is well above average and it is not geared for him. He's the type of child that learns something once, he doesn't need to repeat it, whereas, there's so much repetition at school. I think that's why he's bored and he can't go any further because the majority of the class is average or just below average, and thats what the whole thing is geared to and, anybody, if it doesn't take as much work, they get bored and they don't have special schools for kids like that. They have lots of programs for the slow learner but they don't have anything for a fast learner.
> I think that needs a change. It's not that I expect the whole structure of the school system to be capable of fitting everyone, but there's a great deal of inflexibility there and a degree of separation. To establish authority, it's easier to do it with a lot of silly rules and regulations than to have teachers capable of establishing authority just by the presence of their personality. Teachers, as far as I feel, should be some of the most important...people in our society and they should be recognized. The job they have is very important. I don't think it pays enough to get the best people there and I don't think the best people are encouraged to stay.

To Parkallen Parent 3's child, happiness depended upon the teacher:

> Yes, she is but I think it has a lot to do with the teacher she has. At this school they have very good Grade One teachers, and I found that a lot of teachers have personal problems and have a tendency to bring them to school. This has an effect on the children. At this age they are very impressionable. Like blotters, they absorb feelings. I think that the teacher has to have the two separated.

The child's happiness was related to the teacher and the school environment by Garneau Parent 5. At another regular public school in Edmonton, Parent 5's daughter X told her mother that she wanted out of school because her teacher was yelling. Her daughter felt that she, X, was the cause of this problem because the teacher had told X that she "was bad". Parent 5 was afraid to come to school because she was "not welcome" although her daughter wanted her to come. Parent 5's solution was to switch her daughter to another school.

Other parents described why they moved their children to the regular schools in this study. Garneau Parent 2 described her daughter's unhappiness in another regular school program:

> My kid's unhappy. She was doing things that obviously were the indication of being unhappy, like - nobody likes me, the teacher doesn't like me, I'm stupid, and, in the three years of attending nursery school, I never heard.

Parkallen Parent 3 described her children's experience with another regular public school:

> There was a lot of fighting and bickering, kids with knives and stuff like that and they were lost in the school system. They weren't happy there.

Garneau was labelled as a "good school" by Parent 1 because her child no longer complained of illness in the morning:

> Yes, when my son was going to school Z, he would get up in the morning and he would start crying and complaining of stomach aches because he was so nervous about going and there is nothing like that any more. He is very happy to go off in the morning.

Caraway Parent 2 related her child's physical health to the teacher:

> I haven't had any of the kids complain about, you know, sudden stomach ache or headache and not being able to get to school in the morning. It hasn't happened in seven years. Very few beefs about the teachers, very few, it really is astonishing.

Alternative parents generally answered "yes" to Question 9 and compared the alternative to other previously experienced regular public schools. Caraway Parent 2 "didn't have to fight with her (a daughter) now to go to school". For Waldorf Parent 4:

> I think it can be best be summed up by something X said. I have talked with all the parents and when the weekends come, joyous T.G.I.F., the feeling is - what am I going to do? There is no school on Saturday. For two days I will have no school. That I don't think you will find in too many normal schools. There is enough celebration, enough exciting things going on in the classes that the children love it.

Question 10: Other comments?

From the interviewer's perspective, two questions emerged and were asked during the interviews:

1. What role does the teacher play in your child's education? The frequency of descriptions of teachers-as-individuals prompted this first question.
2. How does your child's schooling compare to that which you experienced as a child? Parents frequently referred to their own experiences at school in attempting to describe what school was like for their children. Their perceptions of their children's school experiences were thus seen in relationship to the parent's own experiences as a child at school.

The responses to Question 10 reflected some of the trends outlined in the parent's answers to previous questions. These trends included opinions concerning:

1. The role of the teacher

2. The interaction between the student as an individual and the school as an institution, personal and impersonal relationships
3. Discipline, behavior and control

1. The role of the teacher

Both regular and alternative parents described the teacher as the key to their child's education. They described the teacher's role from many perspectives. Excerpts of these descriptions have been given (See Interviews: Questions 6, 8, 9).

Frequently the teacher's personality was described by parents as an important factor in their child's education. Alternative parents saw the alternative school as a way of guaranteeing "good" teachers, ie., teachers who matched the parent's home values or teachers who were committed. The descriptions of parents and teachers having the same educational philosophy is in keeping with the Questionnaire data which indicated greater consistency among alternative than among regular parents and educators (See Appendix 4: Goals of Schooling). Getting a good teacher in the regular system was described as due to chance. Frequent examples of descriptions of "bad" teachers occurred in reference to the general public school system.

2. Individual versus the institution, personal versus impersonal

The relationship between the individual student and the schoolas-an-institution was a second trend discussed in

Question 10. The word "impersonal" was most frequently used to describe this relationship in regular schools, while "personal" was more frequently used for alternative schools. Examples have been given which cite that :

-individuals have been described as less important than the system, structure or institution; and unable to change it

-the needs of children who did not fit into the system were described as not being met in the general public school system

-obedience to authority was given as a description of a trend in the general public school system.

One important educational value described by alternative school parents was the giving of a sense of individuality to their children. This meant that their children were viewed and treated as individual persons, not as a part of a group. Smaller classes, selected teachers and parental involvement were the reasons given for this occurring in alternative schools.

Regular parents described the sense of being forced into a standard or average group which resulted in a lack of individuality for their children. This institutional school setting was characterized by a resistance to change and not meeting the needs of those who did not fit into it. An example of the latter was given by Waldorf Parent 1 whose son had a "learning disability". The attitude of the public school system reflected a disowning of the responsibility of educating his child (See Appendix 3).

The general public school system not fostering individuality was directly related by some parents to the development of obedience to authority.

3. Discipline, behavior and control

Regular parents expressed a desire for more "discipline" in the schools. Their secondary desire was for the developent of a personal teacher-child relationship at school. This latter desire was usually expressed by alternative parents, however, they rarely used the word "discipline". Alternative parents frequently viewed the school as helping to develop behavioral controls from within the students. This view was usually related to the philosophy that the school was an extension of the home, that the home values matched those of the school. Regular parents described external sanctions as important for behavioral control. The relationship of home values to school values was rarely mentioned by regular parents. Caraway parents described an acceptance of children's emotions as a first step to helping children understand their own behavior. Waldorf parents described a creative pedagogy which took children's emotions into account.

Regular parents played a less active role in their children's education than did alternative parents. Although they expressed major concerns with the regular public school system, they regarded the school as "looking after" their children (*in loco parentis*). Alternative school parents did not have this same view, Alternative parents had, by choosing to send their child to an alternative, acted upon their educational opinions. This ability to act on their world gave alternative school parents less of a sense of helplessness than regular parents when they were faced with what they labelled "problem situations" at school.

Alternative school parents were much more positive about allowing student control in the classroom environment than were regular school parents. Alternative school parents viewed this as a way of helping students develop internal self-control. Regular school parents frequently described the teacher as controlling student behavior by having authority over the students. This viewed external control as a way of changing student behavior.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Analysis

This study was designed to describe parent and educator opinions concerning the alternative and non-alternative program within two specific public schools during the particular time of the study. This study was not designed to provide a set of generalizations and recommendations regarding "alternative schools" or "regular schools". To this end, a description of trends can be made, as can the recommendation that these trends be further investigated.

Generalizations for the whole school population cannot be made from this study. The reason for this is that the low response rate caused a sampling bias. However, by calculating means of the responses, very general trends did emerge. It is recommended that a larger population be sampled to allow for isolation of specific trends and correlation of these trends to specific variables. The trends outlined in this study thus indicate areas for further, more detailed research.

It should be noted that each respondent attributed different meanings to such key words as 'education'. The clarification of the specific connotations individual respondents gave to such concepts as "back to the basics" would allow for a clearer interpretation of the results. It is recommended, therefore, that this be elucidated in future research. This study assumes that all respondents gave similar interpretations to the questions asked in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the author recognizes that any questionnaire or interview has an inherent bias in that it focuses on particular aspects of the research question and ignores other aspects.

In both schools, the response rate (the proportion of questionnaires returned) was higher for alternative parents and teachers than for non-alternative parents and teachers. Generally, a lower percentage of non-alternative parent respondents consented to be interviewed than did alternative parent respondents. It is recommended that this trend be further investigated to determine if any causal relationship exists between the higher alternative response rate and the respondents' critical views of public education.

The formal education of the alternative parent respondents was found to be greater than that of the non-alternative parent respondents. The alternative parent respondents took a more critical view of the public school system in general than did the non-alternative parent respondents. This was in keeping with the United States Gallup Poll(1979) which found that the higher the level of education, the more critical the respondent was toward the educational system. This trend was particularly evident during the interviews conducted for this study(see Appendix 3).

These results were also in agreement with Hicks'(1975) findings that parents with a limited amount of education preferred traditional programs. In addition, Shaw(1979) related critical opinions regarding education, to socio-economic status. He found that middle- and upper middle-class citizens were knowledgeable about schools and involved with them. Working- and lower middle-class whites were found to be more remote from their local schools, but satisfied with these institutions as middle-class symbols of upward mobility. It is recommended that further research be done in this direction - relating socio-economic status to educational opinion.

Major differences of opinion were found to exist between alternative and non-alternative respondents. The parents and educators of alternative school children gave a higher average rating for both "desired" and "developed" affective attributes than did the non-alternative parent and educator respondents. The non-alternative parents expressed a greater discrepancy between their average ratings for "desired" educational goals and "developed" educational goals than did the alternative parents.

In both schools, an unexpected trend emerged when comparing alternative parent responses with alternative teacher responses. Both groups expressed similar average ratings for their desire for the affective goals of education; however, the alternative teachers consistently perceived these goals to have been developed to a lesser extent than did the alternative parents. This trend is greatest in the Waldorf study. Further investigation of this trend is recommended.

In both schools, the alternative parent and educator respondents demonstrated a consistent trend in their rating for achievement. Of the ten educational goals listed, these respondents uniformly rated achievement as the least desired and the least developed. During the interviews, the parents were asked to give reasons for sending their child(ren) to this particular school(Question 3). Many of the alternative parents stated that it was in reaction to a pressure to achieve placed on their child(ren) in a non-alternative program. Another reason that these parents gave for sending their child(ren) to an alternative program was in reaction to a negative experience either they or their child(ren) had had in a non-alternative program. The alternative parents interviewed consistently indicated that the values upheld at school should be consistent with those held at home. This is also in keeping with the educational philosophies of both Waldorf and Caraway - with less emphasis on the competitive aspects of learning and a greater emphasis on the other goals of education that were listed in the questionnaire.

In both schools, the non-alternative parents and teachers at each Grade level consistently rated positive attitude toward learning higher than they did the other goals of education. However, it was not perceived to have been as well developed by the same respondents.

In both schools, the non-alternative parents and teachers rated the development of cooperation the highest of any of the goals of education(except Garneau Grades 5 and 6). However, the same respondents did not consistently rate cooperation as the most desired goal of education.

In both schools, at the Grades 1 and 2 levels, the alternative parents average ratings for qualified teachers, quality of teaching, academic standards, special programs, level of discipline and amount of attention given to individual students were higher than those of the non-alternative parents. The amount of attention given to individual students was rated the greatest weakness of the Edmonton Public School system according to both alternative and non-alternative parent and educator respondents. It should be noted that, whereas, the alternative classes were the same size or larger than the corresponding non-alternative classes in each school(except Waldorf-Parkallen Grade 1)the alternative parents rated amount of attention given to individual students higher than did the non-alternative parents. This is in keeping with the philosophies of the alternative programs which emphasize the amount of attention given to individual students.

In both schools the alternative parents consistently ranked "facilities and equipment" as the main strength of the Edmonton Public Schools in general. In both schools the non-alternative parents consistently ranked qualified teachers as the main strength followed, in order, by academic standards and teacher commitment. However, these last two, academic standards and teacher commitment, were also described as weaknesses by both the non-alternative and alternative parents. In both schools the alternative parents identified development of student's self-worth as the second greatest weakness.

There were considerable discrepancies in the responses to the question regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the Edmonton Public Schools. That is to say, what some parents regarded as strengths, others regarded as weaknesses. It should be noted, however, that the alternative parents showed greater consistency in their responses to these questions than did the non-alternative parents.

Vocational development was consistently ranked as the least important goal for schooling by parents and educators in both schools and at all levels. This is in keeping with the Grade levels of the respondents' children - vocational development is not a main concern at the primary level. The alternative parents' overall average ranking was consistently personal development first, followed in order by social and intellectual development. The non-alternative parents were not as consistent in their ranking of the goals of schooling. Disparities also existed between the teachers' overall average rank ordering of the goals of schooling and those of the parents at the same Grade level. Further, the rank ordering by the principals of each school did not conform to the overall average ranking of either the teachers or the parents. Nor did the rank ordering by one principal match that of the other principal. It is recommended that the reasons for these discrepancies be investigated in order to develop a more cohesive educational philosophy. It is further recommended that the variables determining the parent and educator expectations regarding goals of education be studied. Prichard(1970) found that the age of the teacher was the personal variable that most affected the choice of the rank of educational tasks.

Notwithstanding the bias present in the interview technique(see Methods), all the parents interviewed consistently indicated that the teacher was the single most important factor in their child(ren)'s education. This was in agreement with Brosseau's(1973) Edmonton Poll of Education which found that the public believes that one of the areas in which local schools are particularly good is that the schools have good teachers. Also, the EPSB memorandum(1980) indicated that although 80% of the parent respondents did not have confidence in the school board itself, only 20% of these same parent respondents did not have confidence in the teachers.

In conclusion, differences of opinion toward education were found to exist between alternative and non-alternative respondents. This was particularly evident in the area of the affective goals of schooling. The alternative parent respondents expressed higher average ratings for desired and developed goals of education than did the non-alternative parent respondents. It is recommended that the similarities and differences between alternative and non-alternative programs be carefully analysed in order to isolate specific characteristics which meet specific parent and educator needs in either type of program. Questions such as how do alternative/non-alternative programs meet the specific needs of a target population might be addressed in future research.

It is further recommended that an assessment of student opinion toward education be made by an unbiased researcher. An in-depth study of how well student needs are being met in the classroom is also recommended.

The trends outlined in this study require more detailed research to be validated as generalizations within each school. If these trends can be generalized to the greater school population, then the formation of alternative schools of the type studied here ought to be fostered in the public school system.

The trends outlined here indicate that the alternative programs studied meet, to a large degree, the specific needs of particular parent and educator groups. Presently the Edmonton Public School Board appears to be meeting these needs by supporting the development of public alternative schools.

B. Synthesis

The author's own personal background is related to this study in the following way. During teaching at three different Junior High schools, I encountered what I believed to be a dichotomy between what I perceived education in a school should or could be, and how I perceived it was. I attempted to narrow the distance between these two views by modifying both the reality and my ideology. The distance remained. The reality student's experience at school was virtually unchanged. By my ideological concern with who the student is and how that relates to what he learns, I isolated myself from my colleagues, threatened the security of the administration, encountered job loss threats from the superintendent and antagonized those students who viewed education as a meaningless game. I had threatened the security of basic assumptions that teachers operated on in their classrooms. I passively resisted in an institutional setting.

I retained many of my beliefs and my ideals, but most attempts at putting them into practice were discouraging. I began to perceive that these problems were greater than my own personal ideological conflicts. These problems gradually became associated with an organized structure which students have for a long time called "the system". The game students played when at school was labelled "dealing with the system". In this sense, school was meaningless to students because school experiences were unrelated to themselves as individual persons. This game lay outside their own reality of who they were.

> They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game(Laing, 1970).

Public schools form a lived-in-reality for the students and educators within them. As humans, we attempt to make this reality meaningful. As institutions, schools try to serve various functions and meet various needs, including those of their students. Fantini(1976) indicates that in the United States, public schools which cannot meet these needs are being dismantled. He cites the statistics of suicides, brutality and repressive authority measures occurring in schools as precursors to this dismantling process.

Schools are a part of children's lives. The classroom experience changes as student-teacher relationships change. As institutions, one of the functions of schools is to preserve the most important traditions and values from previous generations and to pass these on to students of the present generation. However, in the conflict between contemporary change and traditional maintenance, public schools have taken a traditional maintenance stance. The result is that in many schools a defensive self-survival approach occurrs. For example, a typical first year teacher's attitude becomes one of self-survival which, in turn, determine his future classroom relationships with his students.

Student education is entrusted to the care of the institutions called schools. Yet interactions between humans is not an overt part of the school curriculum. For example, the study of man as a school subject consists of mastering facts through memorizing details. The personal meaning that curriculum might have for students does not, and perhaps presently cannot, form a central part of education within the present public educational system.

Are schools to attempt to maintain society's *status quo*, or are they to attempt to educate students for an, as yet, unknown future? Neither function was served in the schools which this author has experienced as a teacher, although the first function was attempted. In these schools educators appeared to ignore the perceptions that students and parents have as a result of their school experiences. (See Appendix 1). Survival of the system and survival of its players becomes the first function of school. Secondarily, educational philosophies are developed to fit that system.

This study examined some of the perceptions that parents have in terms of their children's school experiences. Although some of the results show confusion on the part of educators and parents in their opinion toward education (See Appendix 4: Goals of Schooling), a direction may be indicated by what they agreed upon - the importance of treating the student as an individual in order to teach him and gaining an understanding of the individual student in order to educate him. School systems must, therefore, confront this issue directly before an educational system is to have meaning to its participants.

This study began as an attempt to clarify and find solutions to criticisms of the public school system. It is from this perspective that the author approaches alternative schools within that system. They may provide some insight into changing public educational institutions from the inside toward a more meaningful mode of the teaching-learning process we call education.

C. A Reflection

I have frequently driven through southern Saskatchewan. On one particular trip I saw the land in a new way. The fences and highways became simply man made designs, whose intent was to give geometric structure to the land, an imposed sense of order and control. Are human lives so ordered and controlled? Within this imposed structure and order, man may lose sight of what lies beneath his imposed designs. If we look there what do we find?

To realize this is to see schooling as only one imposed learning structure on a child. What purpose does this imposed structure serve? Seen this way, alternative schools are simply guiding structures which help the development of that which is forming within the individual child. Alternative schools can attempt to help the child to build his own internal structure, to give his own meaning to the world. These schools are an alternative to a rigid structure which is imposed on the child in regular schools and which may not match the individual child. The resulting chasm between the external actions of students at school and their internal self growth in such situations is described by the word meaningless.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS WOULD LIKE YOUR VIEWS........

This questionnaire asks your feelings and opinions about your child's school. In order to keep costs down, we are sending it to a random sample of parents. But to get reliable results we will need responses from all of the sample. Each questionnaire has been numbered so that we can determine who has not returned the completed questionnaire. The parents who have not responded will be followed up by telephone to obtain a response from everyone. Returning your questionnaire promptly by mail will reduce the number of telephone follow-up calls needed.

We will treat your responses with complete confidentiality. The report will contain only statistical summaries and anonymous comments, without identification of individual respondents. A prepaid envelope is enclosed for your convenience - - just drop it in a mailbox - - it does not need a stamp. THANK YOU - - your participation is very much appreciated.

Dr. H. Mosychuk
Assistant Superintendent Monitoring Systems,
Edmonton Public Schools,
429-5621 Ext. 370

______________________ **Elementary**

For each item below place a check mark in the appropriate square according to how you feel about the question.

	YES	NO	UNDECIDED	INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION
1. Are you satisfied with the way the school is handling each of the following programs (emphasis, content, quality of instruction, etc.)?				
(a) Language Arts/English				
(i) Reading/Writing/Speaking/Listening	☐	☐	☐	☐
(ii) Vocabulary/Spelling/Grammar	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Mathematics	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Science	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) Social Studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) Physical Education	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) Second Languages	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g) Fine Arts (Music/Art/Drama)	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h) Health	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Do you feel student discipline is being handled well at the school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Do you feel your child likes school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Do you feel the school system is using its money in a reasonable manner?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. In general, are you satisfied with:				
(a) your child's teacher(s)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) the school Principal?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) the Associate Superintendent of Schools for your Area?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) the Superintendent of Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) the Board of Trustees?	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Do you feel welcome at the school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Do you feel you have an adequate voice in school decisions that affect your child?	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Do you feel you are being satisfactorily informed about your child's learning progress?	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Are you satisfied with the guidance and counseling services at the school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Are you satisfied with the extracurricular programs at the school(sports, school plays, concerts, clubs,etc.)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Are you satisfied with the way attendance is handled at the school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Do you feel the non-teaching employees at the school such as secretaries, aides and custodians, are helpful and friendly?	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Do you feel that the number of pupils in your child's classes is appropriate?	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Generally, are you satisfied with your child's school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
P1. Is your child presently enrolled in a Second Language course or program (French, Ukrainian, German, etc.)?	☐	☐		

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STAFF SURVEY

CERTIFICATED, NON-CERTIFICATED SCHOOL STAFF

The Board of Trustees, the superintendent and your administrators would like to know your feelings about the Edmonton Public Schools as a place to work. Will you please help us by completing this questionnaire and returning it to the proper representative for your school or department. Questionnaires will be sent to us without any individual identification. The reports produced will contain ONLY group statistical summaries and comments, with no identification of individual respondents. Thank you for your help.

Dr. H. Mosychuk,
Assistant Superintendent Monitoring Systems,
Edmonton Public Schools,
429-5621 Ext. 370

For each item below place an X in the appropriate square according to how you feel about the question.

	VERY MUCH	FAIRLY MUCH	NOT VERY MUCH	VIRTUALLY NOT AT ALL
1. Do you feel there is a good communication throughout the school District?	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Do you feel that there is good communication in your school?	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Are you satisfied with the equipment, materials and supplies you are provided?	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Do you feel that you as an individual have adequate influence over decisions that affect you and your job?	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Do you feel you get adequate "backing" when you need it from:				
(a) the Associate Superintendent of Schools for your Area ? (FOR NON-CERTIFICATED STAFF ONLY)*	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) the Superintendent?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) central administration ?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) your Principal? (FOR NON-CERTIFICATED STAFF ONLY)*	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Do you feel you get adequate recognition and appreciation for your performance and accomplishments?	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Do you feel your assigned work responsibilities are fair and reasonable?	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Do you feel that the school District is compensating you fairly?	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Do you feel the school District is communicating its goals, philosophies and policies clearly?	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Do you feel the school District is consistently implementing its goals, philosophies and policies?	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Do you feel the school District's goals, philosophies and practices are consistent with your personal goals and beliefs (for example, regarding educational philosophy, student discipline, personnel practices, parental involvement, etc.)?	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Do you respect and have confidence in:				
(a) the Associate Superintendent of Schools for your Area? (FOR NON-CERTIFICATED STAFF ONLY)*	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) the Superintendent?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) central administration?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) the Board of Trustees?	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) your Principal (FOR NON-CERTIFICATED STAFF ONLY)*?	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Do you feel that the promotion procedures for staff are fair and reasonable?	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Do you feel that the Edmonton Public School District is a good place to work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Do you feel that your school is a good place to work?	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Are you satisfied with the supporting services provided by the central administration in the instructional area?	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Are you satisfied with the supporting services provided by the central administration in the non-instructional area?	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Do you feel that the number of pupils in the classes that you teach is appropriate (CERTIFICATED STAFF ONLY)?	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX 2

STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

We are trying to assess the need for alternative schools in Edmonton. We would like you to give us your opinions on the following questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to identify your needs as teachers and administrators and to determine the needs that this particular school is meeting.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Frank B. Elliott

PLEASE COMPLETE

ADMINISTRATION ONLY:

Present school population ________
Number of teachers: full time ________
part time ________

Has your school enrollment increased, decreased or not changed in the past three(3) years? (circle one)

STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION:

This school offers an alternative primarily in the area of
student characteristics _______
curriculum _______
space/location _______
climate/teaching technique _______
school year organization _______

Can students transfer in or out of your program
within the school? yes or no
outside the school? yes or no.

University of Alberta

PARENT NEEDS SURVEY

We are trying to survey the need for public Alternative Schools in Edmonton. The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the needs of parents who send their children to public schools, that is: Why did you send your child to this particular school? What do you think is important for your child's education? Responses will be anonymous, except for those parents who consent to an interview. All results will be confidential. The information gathered will be used as data for a Master's Thesis on Public Alternative Schools in Edmonton.

Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Frank B. Elliott

PLEASE COMPLETE

Number of children attending the public alternative school_____

For each child attending the public alternative school, please give:

Child's grade	Sex of child	Year of Birth
____________	M or F	____________
____________	M or F	____________
____________	M or F	____________

Parents Education: Please indicate the highest level of

Mother:
1. Schooling completed___________
2. Vocational training___________

Father:
1. Schooling completed_____________
2. Vocational Training_____________

Indicate your opinion of the extent to which you desire schools to develop each of the following in your child(ren):

5 - strongly desire
4 - desire
3 - indifferent
2 - do not desire
1 - strongly do not desire

creativity	1 2 3 4 5
achievement	1 2 3 4 5
self-concept	1 2 3 4 5
positive attitude toward learning	1 2 3 4 5
curiosity	1 2 3 4 5
self-determination	1 2 3 4 5
independence	1 2 3 4 5
freedom from anxiety	1 2 3 4 5
cooperation	1 2 3 4 5
self-growth	1 2 3 4 5

Indicate your opinion of the extent to which this school develops each of the following in your child(ren) by circling the appropriate number:

5 - fully
4 - to better-than-average
3 - to an average degree
2 - to a limited extent
1 - not at all

creativity	1 2 3 4 5
achievement	1 2 3 4 5
self-concept	1 2 3 4 5
positive attitude towards learning	1 2 3 4 5
curiosity	1 2 3 4 5
self-determination	1 2 3 4 5
independence	1 2 3 4 5
freedom from anxiety	1 2 3 4 5
cooperation	1 2 3 4 5
self-growth	1 2 3 4 5

Rate (by circling the appropriate number) your school in each of the following areas:

5 is excellent
4 is above average
3 is average
2 is below average
1 is poor

qualified teachers	1 2 3 4 5
quality of teaching	1 2 3 4 5
academic standards	1 2 3 4 5
special programs (enrichment or options)	1 2 3 4 5
level of discipline	1 2 3 4 5
class size	1 2 3 4 5
proximity to home	1 2 3 4 5
communication between home and school	1 2 3 4 5
amount of attention given to individual students	1 2 3 4 5
administration	1 2 3 4 5
condition of school building/equipment/facilities	1 2 3 4 5
crime/vandalism	1 2 3 4 5
other:	

Complete the questions below with the help of the following list of characteristics:

qualified teachers
teacher commitment
discipline tactics
academic standards
financial support
amount of attention given to individual students
facilities and equipment
relations and communication between home and school
community involvement in school activities
school management and administration
emphasis on "the basics"
student attendance
enrichment and option programs
development of student's self-worth
other, please specify ______________________________

In your opinion,
What are three (3) main strengths of Edmonton Public Schools in general. Rank them in order where number 1 is the greatest strength.

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

In your opinion,
What are three (3) main weaknesses of Edmonton Public Schools in general. Rank them in order where number 1 is the greatest weakness.

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

How important are these goals of schooling to you? Rank these 1 to 4, (with 1 being the most important, 2 being the second most important, etc.)

intellectual development ______

social (group) development ______

personal (individual) development ______

vocational development ______

I may be phoning you regarding an interview.

Please indicate your willingness to further discuss your views related to this questionnaire by checking the box below. The interview will last approximately thirty minutes.

Yes ☐ Name:

Again, thank you for your cooperation.

Please return as soon as completed.

APPENDIX 3.

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old is your child? In what grade? Boy or girl?

2. How long has your child attended this school?

3. Why are you sending your child (children) to this school?
   Why did you chose this school?

4. What are the differences between the regular and alternative programs at your school?

5. What things do you most value about your child's education?

6. What role does the school play in developing these things?

7. In what way does this school meet your needs and, your child's needs - specifically.
   Has this school met your needs?

8. In your opinion how does the general public school system differ from your school?

9. Is your child happy at school?

10. Other?

CASE 1

REGULAR A

I: Q 1

R: X is twelve and X is just about fourteen. Grade five and X is in grade nine, he's in grade eight right now.

I: Q 2

R: Well when he was in grade four we transferred him in March in Regular A and he was there till grade six, and she's been then since grade two.

I: Q 3

R: Well we transferred X from Oliver school because we were very dissatisfied with that school and Regular A is the next closest school. Well we transferred her to Regular A because I wanted them both going to the same school at that point, plus in grade two we had her back for her second grade of grade two and that was just a new school and new people and it was that easier for her. Plus the teacher that was at Oliver, wouldn't have her in a classroom, and that would have been the next one. She's retired now, she should have retired twenty years ago. We were dissatisfied with the administration, the teacher, just everything. Mainly the teacher. He had her for two years, they weren't supposed to get this teacher for the second year but that's the way it worked out, they did. She was just the type of teacher that would have rather chained them to their desk if she could have been happy doing it, if she could have got away with it.

I: Does this have something to do with her attitude towards control, classroom control?

R: Classroom control, her attitude towards teaching.

I: What was her attitued towards teaching?

R: I think at that point she was basically putting in time to retirement. Because you could stand out in the hall and you could just hear her screaming in that classroom. She did have no patience at all anymore and the kids even organized themselves, this is in grade three, organized themselves, went down to the office to complain about this teacher and were told to go back to the classroom and do what they were told. When I questioned them about it they said they wouldn't do anything because she was retiring and it would wreck her retirement, that's what they told me.

I: What specific kind of effects did you see on your children in this kind of situation? What kinds of things happened?

R: They lost their education, he was just so turned off with school in that year it was unreal. He's very histrung and he can't stand people yelling at him and she certainly wasn't any help. Plus, he just got to the point, he would get sick, he didn't want to go to school and he disturbed the class. There was complaints about that so the only way that we knew, whether it was the environment and the teacher who was to transfer schools and see if it made a difference whether it was him or whatever and it made a very big difference within a week there was a total change in him. His attitude towards the school at that time changed really drastically like he actually enjoyed it for the rest of the year, but you see it was only in March that he transferred.

I: So his attitude now is kind of positive or negative?

R: Yes, and what can you say a fourteen year old, you know. He was really bored with it. Which has been one of his problems all the way through school.

I: Q 4

R: What do you mean by alternative programs?

I: There's a Alternative A section.

R: Oh, I don't know too much about it, all I know about that is anytime I've had anything to do with any of the children is that they're not very well disciplined. That's about all I know about that part of the school.

I: Q 5

R: That's really difficult to pinpoint. Mostly being able to think independently is what I hope. In fact I don't think they are into that at all period. The school system is designed to discourage anything like independent fact as far as I'm concerned. Actually and that's skills to get by, academic skills and hopefully it won't touch him at all other than that. I don't think they are really doing what I would like them to do.

I: Because they aren't able to do that thing, then maybe they might just concern themselves with the academics, is that what you are saying?

R: Well, I suppose, yah. What I mean by that is if they can't, rather than doing what they're doing or trying to do to the children, I wish they would just leave them alone because they don't seem to be doing anything positive in that area. An individual study which they don't have in the schools, you know, as a person, as an individual, they don't get that in the schools, not with the sizes that they are. I feel it's actively discouraged at any rate. I think it's more administrative, you know, making it easy. How can you say that's obedience to authority, it's the way the system is it's the way the systems always been. When we were going to school it was the same way.

I: My question along the line is; why is it not acceptable now?

R: Well I don't think it should ever be acceptable. There's alot of reasons people use to justify the approach, but I don't find any of them valid. It's quite difficult to set an example. Your whole day is, you do this at this time, you do that at that time, you're told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. That really stifles their individuality, their creative thought, it stifles anything, you just do what you're told and you don't ask questions because that gets you in trouble.

I: Q 5

R: You get the odd teacher that does, you try hard. There still are some really good teachers but they're getting to be less and less all the time, at least in my experience. I think they're frustrated with it too, because they have to go along with what's put down for them to do and they vary too far. Like when X was teaching, she varied from the program and she was fired and I think she would have been a fantastic teacher if they wouldn't have let her go. She's got her degree and she's taught, but she doesn't stick right to the curriculum that they set. It's not so much the curriculum it's the matter again. Rules and regulations for the sake of having rules and regulations, you know. You get to the point that it's an extension of the principle, discipline for the sake of discipline, not for any good reason, just because someone says so, which you get into sort of a political space there, but the children are being turned out to accept whatever authority figures are put up without ever questioning it.

I: Q 7

R: My daughter for the last two years has had a really fantastic teacher and she's come along way. The only thing that upset me was at the school she was in a special reading program, she's got a visual perception learning dissability and she was in a special program and they stopped the program. They said they didn't have enough teachers or enough time. It was really sad because it was right at the time where she was really picking up her reading development. I know there is teachers that are out of work in this city. You know, I couldn't understand why they told me that they didn't have enough teachers. You get flashes in the right direction now and then but they seem to get stifled quickly, you know, the more positive aspect never seems to last.

I: So they happen occasionally but they don't last?

R: Right. I think it's more an individual teacher that's gone beyond the normal that usally gets buried under the bureaucracy of the whole thing again, you know.

I: Q 8

R: The school is not even structured, their day is not even structured well. Like I cannot believe how many field trips these kids go on. My daughter here, it is the last day of school tomorrow basically, and she is still doing homework because they didn't get it done they were on so many field trips through the year that they didn't get the classroom time in. You know, when they have that many months of school they should be able to cover what they're supposed to cover and if they can't cover it they should look over their whole programming thing again. I think this school or any school, any individuality, it's counted just through the people running it. The scene is insured, multitudness forms to be filled out and things like this, I don't see a real difference. When X first went to school, he was in an open class, an open school and I think it could have been good, but I don't think that it really was. Well again there was the Alternative A program. There was a discipline problem in that they just let them run wild. They didn't have any rules. We're complaining about too many rules for the sake of rules, but these schools were set up totally no rules which is no good either. I think from what I've read I think it's kind of typical what they've been finding but I think the program has been designed to fail with that, if you know what I mean. I think that the people that have set up the perimeters for the experiment have set it up so that it has to fail.

I: Why?

R: Because I don't think they want anything to change or anything to be different. If you can prove that it's not going to work then you are safe from having a change in that direction.

I: Q 9

R: X was in an open school and as soon as he hit a regular classroom, it destroyed anything that he had going. He had some, he had one teacher here who was really good, his grade two teacher, he enjoyed that, he was so happy he just adored that lady, the whole class did. She was incredible and then he hit that one over at Oliver and that kind of destroyed it. He was basically happy in grade five, grade six he got a teacher, I couldn't even talk to the man. Then he transferred to MacKerna, he was happy the first year there. It really makes a difference with the teachers that he has. It really is what it comes down to. You have to refer that to personal experience. The only way that I can think of it is the years I went to school I only ever had two teachers that I really ever enjoyed their classes or thought that they were reasonable people. The ration probably holds true today as well. X is basically quite happy in school. She has her days but everybody does. She has always been a little more happy but I think because school is more of a challenge to her than it is to X. The classes she has to work a little harder. I think that too makes a difference, because X is well above average and it is not geared for him. He's the type of child that learns something once, he doesn't neet to repeat it where as there's so much repetition in school. I think that's why he's bored and he can't go any further because the majority of the class is average or just below average and that's what the whole thing is geared to and anybody that if it doesn't take as much work they're getting bored and they don't have special schools for kids like that. They have lots of programs for the slow learner but they don't have anything for a fast learner. It's very inaccessible and I think that needs a change. It's not that I expect the whole structure of the school system to be capable of fitting everyone but there's a great deal of inflexability there and a degree of seperation. To establish authority, it's easier to do it with alot of silly rules and regulations than to have teachers capable of establishing authority just by the presence of their personality without resorting to this type of thing. Teachers as far as I feel should be some of the most important, well they are, some of the most important people in our society and they should be recognized. The job they have is very important. I don't think it pays enough to get the best people there and I don't think the best people are encouraged to stay.

I: What kind of situation, one of the kinds of things that you were talking about was this one person that resigned simply because they were in a system which would not meet their standards.

R: She felt stifled in the system. As an example, she got into a considerable amount of hassle, she had a Junior high school class at a time where the girls felt that they could relate to her as a friend and for alot of reasons you know, mostly nonsense in a final analysis that they really jumped on her for it. What it comes down to is that they didn't like the thought that she could maintain a classroom order and still was a good enough person that the students felt at ease with her. You know, it comes down to the question of authority being imposed on the students or if the students generate it themselves, the feeling. As a teacher, the teacher must be able to have the respect of the class without having the rules, all this nitpicking nonsense toward respect? Those are the teachers that X has been the happiest with too, and X. My own time that I spent in school, there is teachers that you respect and that you enjoyed their classes and would do whatever for, and others gave you nothing. But they weren't giving up either themselves as teachers. Some would torment mercyless.

I: So giving as themselves is an important part of it?

R: Oh yah, very much so. As an important part of people being people in general, you know, never mind teachers in a classroom.

I: When teachers are mean people, or mean people in general, the kind of thing which you see happening in the classroom is the teacher not trying to make that contact, the teacher infact objectifying students seeing them not as personally?

R: Right, a group of children, there's you individuality again, you are my class and this is what we learn this year and that's it. They don't get to know them as people. X's grade two teacher was really incredible. She knew everyone of those students inside out, but she took an interest in them and she also got very involved with the parents of the students, which is something that you don't see too much of. The communication between the school and the home is still really lacking. You know, the only time you hear from them is when the kids have done something they don't like and they call up and say this, that and the other, you never hear good things.

CASE 1

ALTERNATIVE A

I: Q 1

R: She just turned 7 on June 5, 1980. Grade 1.

I: Q 2

R: Starting in September of last year.

I: Q 3

R: I chose this school because of speaking with a number of people who are already sending their children to the school, who to me seemed like people who were actively participating in their child's education rather than passively sending them and waiting to see what the teachers did to them. When she was in kindergarten, she went to a regular school kindergarten and I was thwarting my attempts to be actively involved and saw that creativity was being stifled. Communication skills were not necessarily being generated but in actual fact were being discouraged because you're supposed to sit and listen to the teacher not express or have, in some cases, your own opinion. Those things are very important to me. Also, the idea of incorporating the emotional development of children into the curriculum and having the school room be like a family was very important to me. X being an only child, the more people she sees as being in her family, the better.

Something else that just occured to me, was the idea of children being allowed to proceed at their own pace rathern than at some prescheduled, oh we don't take that, until February which I ran into in kindergarten, she was obviously advanced in mathematical skills and would come home crying because she was so bored in kindergarten. When I spoke with the kindergarten teacher about some possible enrichment programs or just setting up little learning centres for her in mathematics, I was told that that was not done until March and as it was only October, no that wasn't possible. That's when my search began because I was determined that that was not going to be the kind of education she had in an on going basis.

I: Q 4

R: Yes, I probably have a better advantage than most parents in that I, at that time, had a job that took me into schools and saw a lot of dead kids, a lot of turned off kids, a lot of kids who, to me in their questioning of me when I was going to speak with them, appeared very bright but had obviously been turned off by the system and when I was seeing this in grades 3 and 4, it said to me the school system is not meeting the needs of the children, it's there to meet the needs of the people in the school system.

I: Q 7

R: In terms of meeting my needs, I know all of the children in X's classroom, I know most all of their parents and the children know me. I've participated in the classroom. I'm there every Friday at noon and I see what's going on. I'm also there sometimes for a half day at a time and can actively see how X and the other children are learning and interrelating. It's not something I get on a three times a year report card.

I: How does that experience compare to a report card?

R: It's very personal, like I still have the interview with the teacher two or three times a year, but it almost seems like it's not necessary, it's after a fact and I feel like most of the things she's telling me, I already know versus people who go to the regular school system who don't find out until six months into the year that Johnny's failing in math because they haven't been encouraged to participate in the classroom. They don't feel like they're a part of their education and that is the most important thing to me. Well, another one of my needs is that X sees the variety of family relationships that exist and with the parents coming in, she sees that some kids live with their mom, some kids live with their dad, some kids live with their mom and dad. Those people are valued people by all the children in the classroom. Everybody is special and everybody has something special about them and because I work with adults who are unhappy, I want to make sure that these things are incorporated into her daily learnings. As far as her needs go, one of her major needs as far as I was concerned was that she be part of a larger family group that there be a lot of support for learning and excitement about learning because we had to do some backtracking for her because she was turned off in kindergarten and its been re-stimulated that her curiosity be kept up and the pace at which she worked is not externally placed but rather an internal sort of thing. That her self esteem is always given opportunity to get some more strokes and I see that all the time. Those kids are just so positive with one another. She's able to see that I'm interested in her education. That seems to have enhanced our relationship. You know, my moms coming to school today, this is my mom. When she talks to me about the kids in her room, I know instantly who she's talking about and that's been pretty significant I think, versus a regular school system I wouldn't know the children or the parents.

One of the things that's helpful of course in Alternative A, is that most of the parents have similar values in regards to what they want as an educational process for their children. Their life styles although they may differ on the surface in terms of belief about people, I think that's the same. Where as in a regular classroom you're going to get people who think child abuse is quite alright, who think that children should be seen and not heard. Who batter the hell out of their kids in terms of self esteem and those kids then go to the classroom and act that out and you know the implications that has for a child's education.

I: Q 8

R: Well, part of it is I think is allowing children to work at their own speed rather than at a pre-program speed. I think that in a lot of cases it goes down unless you've got a really involved teacher who takes the time to find out what's going on in Johnny's home that's creating this kind of behavior in school. I've seen too many teachers who treat Johnny's behavior at school as only being related to school and not taking into consideration that perhaps Johnny's acting this way because his mom and dad were fighting all night and he didn't sleep. In larger classrooms it gets extremely difficult I realize for the teacher to know what's going on in all of the families to have contact and to give to the children what they need or maybe what they're missing when things are not going well at home. I think there needs to be more learning about emotions in school not just in health but acceptance of emotions. Gee Johnny when you act like that it seems to me that you're feeling angry rather than sit down Johnny and shut up and quit acting like that.

I: In that specific example, would you be contrasting, say, Alternative A to a regular program?

R: I think I am in what I've witnessed in the regular classroom it's fairly obvious to me that the teachers are working on the idea that all behavior has meaning and that children don't spend their whole life in school and they have a fairly good understanding of what's going on in the childrens' lives and will revolve a program for a day to help the child cope with a crisis. Maybe an example would help to illustrate; there was a boy in the 5-6 room who was going to have open heart surgery. Everyone in the class was obviously very worried about the boy as was the boy. The teacher set up a whole week, theme was the heart and every class or every subject had something to do with the heart. In spelling it was learning how to spell the name of the veins, things like aorta and the valves and all those kinds of things. In art they made things out of hearts.

I: This kind of thing happens. Supposing it was tried in a regular program. Do you think there might be any difference between doing it in a Alternative A environment than in a regular environment?

R: Yah, I think the atmosphere is missing in a regular environment. There's a tremendous atmosphere of caring that exists in Alternative A that I haven't felt so much when I've been in a regular school, it's each student for himself and it's sort of, you know, clawing away to the top or I don't know, it just doesn't feel very empathic or supportive.

I: Why do you think that the Alternative A atmosphere is caring? What are the kinds of things that help create parental involvement with the kids? Something to do with the continued program that's connected to what parents think, a continuation of home life?

R: Yah, there's that, there's also the teachers we select. We put a lot of time and effort into selecting that way, Alternative A is made of the teachers really, the parents are the back up support, but, it's the teachers that make up the difference. They set the atmosphere and the tone in the classroom and the parents enhance that and work with the teacher to ensure that it continues to work. We have to have teachers who believe in enhancing children's self esteem, who believes in the development of children's communication skills and believe that children have rights and I've seen a whole lot of that missing in a regular school system, kids have no rights. The regular school system seems to have the built in premise that you're there to learn things like reading, writing, arithmetic, you know the three r's kind of thing. They're just now more and more perhaps beginning to get into things like PFL, family life, those kinds of things, but that hasn't been a major component in the regular school system. The teachers in a regular school system don't necessarily have to be committed to the same things that our Alternative A teachers are committed to. They may be committed to math, the most important thing for them is that the kids know math, whether their parents are divorcing or their grandmother died yesterday. I don't care they should have done their homework. The idea of children moving from teacher to teacher for different subjects rather than having one teacher who teaches almost everything cuts down on continuity, cuts down on a feeling of classroom community. I think there is a struggle by some teachers to maintain some sanity with kids who have a lot of behavioral problems and for whom there does not seem to be enough help or support or direction.

I: What kinds of things do you see happening in those kind of terms? In terms of supposing there's a particular behavioral problem in the classroom, in a regular classroom, and you're talking about a teacher trying to cope in a regular classroom with that kind of situation, what sort of things do you see happening here?

R: The child's getting alot of negative reinforcement for bad behavior and perhaps attempts to change, are not being noticed because he's built up such a horrible reputation that it's just, you know, somebody wrote on the board, well is must be Johnny, he's always bad. Punishment for behavior that no one seems to me attempts to discover the root of. There's no support for this kid, there's not understanding or acceptance that you know. Johnny has difficulty learning math so we'll give him an extra little help here kids, the rest of you help Johnny. Johnny, you got 10% again, you're going to have to work harder. Poor Johnny has a math learning disability, who knows. There isn't the value placed on being different if you're unique, if you're different, you're frowned upon. It's a cookie factory and I think that's why some kids turn to such so called rotten behavior, because they refuse to be stuck in that mold and it's not that they're stupid or, I guess, it's the opposite, they just refuse to play the game. Dropouts, delinquents, turned off the school system, stopped learning when there's a whole lot of potential there for them to learn or if they have a learning disability. It's not diagnosed its just treated as bad behavior, Johnny's a bad boy and he grew up being an adult who has no confience, who is very angry. I see them everyday. I think more damage than the strap is the verbal ridicule that I have heard in walking down the hall sometimes in the schools and I just shudder. The damage that does to a child is irrepairable and Alternative A, when there is a problem with behavior, the behavior is looked at as having some meaning and the meaning and the reason for the behavior is examined. In one of the classrooms the grade 3-4 classrooms the kids are more able to work things out, they have, from what I understand, my daughters not in there yet, but, it's examined by both teacher and parents as well as by the kids in the classroom. So and sos behavior affects me so therefore I have a responsibility to tell them how I feel when they act like a such and such they also have the responsibility to tell me why they're acting like that today and all together all of us in the classroom here should attempt to work out a reasonable solution that everyone's happy with. I think one of the things that goes along with self esteem is that kids in Alternative A have a sense of power, not power in a negative sense but a sense of their own power because they're encouraged to express opinions. You have to be a pretty together teacher to handle some of their opinions because they get quite frank and in some cases brutal with their opinions but, they are encouraged to have opinions and be able to back them up not just, I don't like her and I don't know why.

I: Q 4

R: Social skills, a curiosity about life and learning and the basic skills to enhance that as she matures. I think that if you give a child tools of learning to read, to compute mathematically and how to use resource materials, then giving them the tools for learning as long as you don't stifle their creativity and their curiosity. Acceptance of other people and the way that they chose to live their lives and acceptance of who they are whether that be they're different because of their race or their creed or their lift style. Value in other people. I guess the only other, is excitement about learning, I mean, that's a little bit different than curiosity, a little bit different than creativity but just an excitement. I mean, that classroom of X's just bounds with excitement, my God, sometimes the level is, well almost more than a person can handle but its exciting being there.

I: Q 9

R: Oh yes. No, initially for awhile, yes, but she wanted to learn there and there wasn't the opportunity provided for her to learn in ways that made her happy so she was frustrated and that scared me. I mean she went into school, into kindergarten, drawing a cow any way she felt a cow should look at that particular day and very soon it was: No, X, cows don't look like that, they look like this and cows aren't purple. So therefore there goes the imagination.

I: What kinds of things do you see happening when she reaches Jr. high level? There is no Alternative A at a Jr. high Level, she's going to be encountering a different situation. What sorts of things do you see happening?

R: I think that the foundation will have been laid for her to cope with a different form of education. She will be a whole lot more self directed than most kids going into grade 7 with a whole lot more self confidence, self esteem, communication skills, all those things we've talked about, and well, I'm still optimistic that by the time she gets to grade 7 that there will be a Alternative A Jr. high.

I: In other words, you don't see these kinds of things continuing at a Jr. high level, in a regular school program.

R: Unfortunately not, not on a regular basis, you hit a gem of a teacher every now and again and that carries you through the year. If you get one out of eight, that's great. That's purely chance. Russion Roulette. I figure by then she'll be mature enough in the sense of being in grade 7, not overly mature, but self confident enough to handle it.

CASE #1

REGULAR B

I. Q. 1

R. Child is nine.

I. Okay, the child is nine years of age and it is a boy and in what grade.

R. He is in Grade Two.

I. How long has your child attended this school?

R. He has been at X for a year and a half.

I. Q. 3

R. He was going to a Separate School and he was failing Grade Two, and he had done really well for his first grade but didn't seem to have enough interest in the reading so they had a reading resource over at X and I decided to put him there, in case it would help. He still ended up failing Grade Two but at least this way it picked it up. That actually is the reason that I chose the school. It was for the reading resource - they didn't have it in the other school. Also when he was going to the separate school, they had grades one, two and three and I really didn't feel that he was getting enough attention like he did at X in a smaller class.

I. So X had a reading resource and it didn't have split grades - those were the most important.

I. Q. 4

R. I really don't know too much about the alternative at all.

I. Q. 5

R. The most important thing is that they should be able to get a job that is worth something that they are really interested in getting. I also feel that especially if you get your high school education you have a lot better chance just even talking more intelligently with a person and getting along with people a lot better.

I. Supposing your children get a job that is worth something, that means that it is something ...

R. Something that X would like to --- I don't know how to explain it - he has more actual choice. If he dropped out in junior high or say Grade Ten, there are only certain options that he can go into.

I. His choice of jobs in the future are less limited?

R. I have got a girl in kindergarten too, and I am just taking it for granted that it is the one.

I. Is she in X, too?

R. Yes, she is.

I. Well, then let's include her as well. She is a girl in Kindergarten, and how old is she?

R. Five

I. And she has been at X the same time?

R. About one year. I sent her to that school for the reason that my son was going to that school and she could go along with him and I am very pleased with it.

I. Now does that apply to your daughter as well?

R. Definitely.

I. Things that you value about education, the things that you want are getting a job that is worth something, having and being able to get along with other people and being able to talk to them intelligently, having more opportunities and making sure that their job future isn't limited.

R. That applies to her also.

I. Is there anything else that you value about your child's education that you think they should have when they are finished?

R. Well, I really think that the school should help them morally as well. I don't know if this applies to this question - but I feel that the more people that they have giving them guidance, the better off they will be.

I. Do they get that from the school - do you think?

R. To tell the truth, in one way I don't think that they get enough of it at X. They don't seem to have the discipline there that the kids need. I have worked, myself, as lunch-time supervisor and I found that it was just terrible. I just couldn't believe the kids with their language and they weren't a bit afraid. They would stand in front of you and just tell you off and weren't a bit afraid, and there has to be a reason for that, because I never saw that at the separate school. At the separate school you would see the teachers out in the playground with the children - spending time with them, and you just don't get that over at X. On the average, I think the teachers are good, but I just don't feel that they spend enough time with the kids - out of the classroom.

I. So teachers guiding and playing with kids outside the classroom or interacting with them outside the classroom is important?

R. I think that it is very important. It helps the kids get to know their teachers more on a personal level and I think that it gives them more respect for the teachers. I know that when I went to school, the teachers were always out, even if they were only out walking around. I really feel that it is a different atmosphere altogether.

I. Why is it important that the kids get to know the teachers - how does that ...

R. Well, I think that the better they know the teachers, the harder they will try to please them. It is only natural that a person will do more for somebody they knew than a total stranger.

I. So you feel that your children would be better able to work with a teacher that they knew, rather than somebody that was impersonal.

So the things that you value are - they can get a job at something that they like to do, and they are better able to get along socially, and they are able to talk intelligently to people, that there are more opportunities open to them, and that their job futures are not limited. Does that just mean job futures, or general future.

R. Their future in general I would say.

I. And that they get various people giving them guidance and they are getting helped personally; they obtain some interaction with teachers and that this personal interaction is very important because the better they know the teacher, the better, the teacher isn't a stranger - they are able to work.

Was there anything else? The kinds of things that you value - that is really important?

R. I don't know, I can't really think of any.

I. What role does the school play in developing these kinds of things? You have already said in the guidance, that if teachers are interacting on a personal basis - playing with them, etc.

R. One thing that I think is very important - that probably pertains to the last question more - is that the parents should get to know the teacher too. I don't just mean three times a year when we are called after the report cards, but I really think that they should check in every couple of weeks or once a month to find out exactly how their kids are doing, not just their school work but how they are getting along with the other kids and what the teacher, themselves, feels. From what I can see there is just not enough parent involvement either.

I. How come? Is the school open to parents coming in?

R. I think it is the parents. I know I had a good opportunity because I was there just about every day, so I could check in with them. But even now that I am not, I make it a point to walk down and meet the kids and maybe just talk to the teacher, but I imagine that because the parents are working, a lot of them - both are working and it is probably hard for them, but I just find that there is just not enough parent involvement.

I. What role does this school play in helping your children get along socially better?

R. I think that they play a big role because the kids spend most of their day in school and they are going to pick up more there than they actually will pick up at home. Mind you at home they have to get the basics set for them, but when they go to school and see the other kids and how they are behaving and how the teachers and principal are picking this up then they are going to follow along pretty well those steps.

I. So the atmosphere that is created at school - how the teachers interact with the students, how the principal interacts with the teachers and students - they see that and from that ...

R. They pick up their own attitude towards things - how - it is like with X, if one of his friends broke a window at school and came out boasting a few minutes later that nothing had been done. Then to him, he would probably get the opinion that if he can do it, why can't I, there is nothing wrong with it. And I think - I don't know if this is cruel, I don't believe that X would - I don't know how to explain it - it does have good disciplines, but it is just strictly during the school hours and the kids don't have enough supervision - they have supervisors there, like I said I was one myself - but they have no fear of us whatsoever, the only thing that we could do was to take them down to the staff room and they would have to sit out in the hall and eat their lunch. They aren't afraid of that, but as far as the discipline during the school hours - it sounds, from what I can gather, probably pretty good. But I don't know how to take this question - I know that I am probably not answering it.

I. These two are just trying to get if these are the kinds of things you want, how do you see the school helping - in what way is the school going to be doing it, and for you, it will be the atmosphere that it creates, how the kids see principals, teachers,interacting,in terms of the discipline - how it occurs, which seems to end at the end of school. School ends right here - there is a bell and it is over - that sort of an attitude.

R. There is one other thing that I would like to add - something that I really approve of at X is that if the kids do well at something, if they have a good test, or if they hand in a good report, they will really get praised for it. I noticed that with my son - he was quite shy when he first started there, and they really, really bolstered his confidence and he has really been a different person altogether since he started at X. And I think that they are really good at handing out praise.

I. When your son was regarded as failing Grade Two, was there a reason given at all?

R. Why he was to stay in Grade Two?

I. Yes. I am sure that there were a number of reasons - what was the reason the school was indicating?

R. Well, it was completely his reading. Also they felt that he did not have enough confidence in himself. He didn't do too badly at home, if he was reading to me, but he would get to school and he didn't have enough confidence to stand up and read out loud. This year after taking that reading resource, he has really gained a lot of confidence and they more or less asked me, which is something that I didn't really understand. I know that when I went to school if you failed a grade, you failed the grade and that was all there was to it. But they, the teacher and the principal more or less asked me if I thought that he should stay behind, and definitely I thought he should if he needed it as there was no point in pushing him into Grade Three. But I just found that sort of odd that the parents would have it left up to them.

I. Did you have the sense that your son was able to read fairly well at home? and that he actually had the confidence in the surrounding at home to learn to read, but that when he went to school this atmosphere was ...

R. Well, he still did have a problem with reading at home, I am not saying that he didn't. I don't know what the level that other kids read at, so I can't compare it, but I know that I didn't really think that he read too badly at home but it seemed that when he got to school, it seemed that he couldn't get the words out and he did have a speech problem at the beginning of Grade One and he took speech lessons all year and think that this with another thing of being pulled out of class, I think that it sort of directed attention to him and he has sort of gotten over that now.

I. The thing I am trying to get at is, is that whether or not this was in fact a reading problem or whether it was due to the situation.

R. I think that it was probably due more to a lack of confidence than anything else.

I. Then at the school that he was at, this confidence was not encouraged?

R. When he went to the Separate School, as I said, there were split classes and there were grades one, two and three. Actually what really made me decide to switch was after his second report card, I went to talk to her and she told me that they had the three classes, and that she would go to the Grade Ones, then the Grade Twos which my son was in, and she would tell them what to do in their workbooks, then she would go to the Grade Threes and I said "what happens if they are half way through a page and they don't know something, can they come up and ask you?" She said, "no, they can't come up and ask while I am teaching the other kids", so there were actually 2/3 of the class that couldn't go up and ask the teacher if a problem came up. I did not feel that that was right - that a student should be able to go up and ask a teacher at any time if they don't understand, and I think that that was partly why my son got so far behind. He couldn't go up and ask her about it, unless he happened to notice it right at the time that she was giving directions, and he was having a hard time reading the instructions, so it really, really threw him way behind and they never let me know about it until the report card came out. So that didn't help me too much being able to help him at home. I was really very disappointed with his teacher there and he is in split classes now - there are two classes Grade One and Two. There doesn't seem to be any problem, mind you, it does seem to be a smaller class and he doesn't seem to have any problems whatsoever in that way. He can go up at any time and ask her.

I. It also seems that you are interacting with the school and are aware of where your son is at without waiting for some report card.

R. Yes, definitely.

I. Q. 7

R. This school has met my needs definitely.

I. What about your daughter? the meeting of her needs?

R. She is just doing terrific. She is crazy about her teacher, she really enjoys going to school. They have so many different activities, so many field trips, and cooking. She really enjoys it. She is looking forward to starting Grade One next year. Mind you I think that she might be getting the same teacher next year, which just pleases her all to ...

I. Q. 8

R. The only really startling difference is, as I mentioned before, is the discipline. I would be at the Separate School quite often and I would never hear the children swearing or doing this or doing that, but at X, I don't know, I just can't believe the words that those kids use, and they seem to have no respect at all for anyone other than themselves. I am not saying all the kids, but there are really quite a few that really got out of hand, and I think that the problem is that they did this in the classes also. I don't think that the teacher phoned the parents, and I think that the parents should have been phoned each time that their child did something like talked back, and let the parents know so that maybe the parents could handle some of the discipline at home. But I don't think that the school gets in contact with the parents enough to let them know how the child is acting in school. Until they get to the point, maybe where they are put out for a few days, but as far as discipline, I really'd don't think that they have enough of it at X.

I. Do you think that this problem is related to the school, itself, or to the environment in the school or to the kids - what the kids get at home before they come to school? How do all those things fit into this?

R. I suppose that it would be like that in any school that there would be kids that might not have as happy a home life as they would like, and that it is bound to come out at the school, but I don't know , I really don't know what the reason would be. I can't say.

I. Q. 9

R. Yes, when my son was going to the Separate School, he would get up in the morning and he would start crying and complaining of stomach aches because he was so nervous about going and there is nothing like that anymore. He is very happy to go off in the morning.

I. Q. 10

R. I really can't think of anything, other than except for the distance from X being greater for both my kids, I am happy with all the teachers that I have met and the principal.

I. How important do you see the teacher as in giving your child an education? What sort of a role do they play?

R. I think that the teachers are most important of all. If a child didn't like their teacher or the other way around which is bound to happen, sooner or later, some teacher is going to run into a child that she can't get along with, there is just no way that that child is going to be able to do anything because they are not going to have any ambition to try and please the teacher in any way. I think if the child likes the teacher, it can be a big boost in the right direction and they would want to try hard to please her. And there are too, sometimes problems where the child does like the teacher and wants the attention, if she is in a bigger class, which I don't believe in, she is not going to be able to give him the attention they want.

I. So you would like smaller classes. Because your children would receive a better education.

R. Yes, they receive more individual attention which I think they have to have, especially when the child might be a little below average, I think that they have to have individual attention, and in a big classroom a teacher just can't do that, and there is more chance for rebelling because they are not getting the attention they need.

CASE # 1

ALTERNATIVE B

I. Q 1, Q 2

R. It is a boy, in Grade Two, and he has attended this school for one year.

I. Q 3

R. Our son has a learning disability - I think that he has dyslexia - where they reserves everything; everything he sees is a mirror imagine. In the regular system in St. Albert, of course he was having difficulty and we sought alternatives. This was in kindergarten and in Grade One - they held him back the first year in Grade One and had him go the second year. Then he wasn't learning how to read and write, so you go through the usual routine that you go through, as I found out from a lot of other people. If you have problems or your child is having problems with school - it is either the child or the parent or someone.

I. So you found that it was your problem - is that right?

R. The problem is described as "our problem" - but seen as "your problem". I think that that is a far comment but a little unfair to the system because they are dealing with large numbers and I don't think are equipped or haven't been equipped in the past for children with special problems. I guess that it is the kind of problem you have with any large organization - and the educational system is a large organization if you want to call it that. It is the kind of problem that you run into with a large system that has been perfected by those involed in it, and are reluctant to change or adjust. Unfortunately, I think that that is the description of a lot of large systems. The older they are, the more reluctant they are to adjust - the more successful, the more inflexible. How do you change an organization that has been around since, I guess, Confederation - or at least the Province. The education system was set up and those kinds of large organizations resist change. Some people who try to change them are lucky if they even survive.

Our little boy was repeating Grade One and then we started looking at alternatives for him. It was clearly "our" problem. It was presented to us as, I guess, a black and white situation - either your child is intelligent or he is not intelligent, either he is normal or he is retarded; and that is almost the approach they took in the system. They did all kinds of things to try and convince us that was the case. What happened then was we met Dr. X or your department and she tested X and found out that he had a fairly high I.Q., actually, inspite of what the St. Albert school system thought. He did have some disability ...

I. He was mentally retarded in the St. Albert system?

R. No really. They called it a learning disability. (The synonym for that in the establishment is "retarded".) They don't differentiate. It is simply those that can learn and those that can't. It has always seen that way and it is like poverty - we have always got it! But if you happen to be one of the unfortunates, "there is nothing we can do my friend". That is basically the position they took.

I. And they also found that as a system they weren't able to function with him? Or that letting him repeat Grade One was not helpful.

R. Yes. The route seemed to be in that system that it was two years per grade until you were old enough to leave school, and by then you have such severe problems in terms of behavior and emotional problems that it is too late. There is an alternative and that is the opportunity to go into the arts and crafts, and if they can teach you anything they do; and if they can't, they babysit. I am being a little harsh on that part of it because they try to be set up.

I guess what I knew was that the Government was making money available for special education for these very kinds of people and trying to do something about it, but it was to get the whole system to use it the right way at the right time and the right place; and that still has to happen. There is even more money available this year as you know in the budget, and you know I think in the future ...

I. Where do you see it hanging up?

R. Well, I think it is this "change" problem. You know you have to have people first understand what a learning disability - have heard of dyslexia, for example. (I am not certain that is what X has but I think that is what he has.)

I. Dr. X diagnosed that?

R. Well, she diagnosed him as having a learning disability and she thinks it is probably dyslexia, but I am not sure if there is any tests that can prove beyond a shadow of a doubt. You know that the children are having processing problems but you don't know exactly where and how. It is not a very exact science. Dr. X recommended Alberta B to us as being not necessarily a school to help children with learning disabilities but the type of school where a child with a learning disability would have a chance to learn; not that that school is set us for that, but because of the approach they take.

We went over and saw the films and listened to the speakers and agreed with them because of the approach. You would at least have a chance to survive. The environment might be such that X would have a chance to learn. Where he was, that did not seem to exist. Either you "do" it or if you do not, you are a "bad boy "; you are not trying. I think when Dr. X tested him, she found that his word comprehension was about age sixteen level, just as an example. So you understand they can't tell unless they process it. That is how we chose this school - clearly because he has got a learning disability.

Now! Once we had seen this school and the approach they took, there is opportunity for our daughter who tends to have very little trouble in school. To go to this kind of a school, I would like to have her ...

I. She is older?

R. Yes. She is eleven and in Grade Six this year. She goes into Junior High next year.

I. I think the only other is in Toronto or Vancouver.

R. Yes. They have just got Grades One and Two here and the opportunities for her to go just won't be there. She does well in the regular system, but I know that she would really enjoy the approach they take using colors and certain artistic approaches.

I. Q 5

R. I see education - and I guess I think back to the days when I went to school - as doing more than teaching you to read and write. I think it teaches people how to survive.

I. "Surviving" means being able to function within a system, is that right?

A. Yes, or within society - a little broader than just being able to do the mechanics of things like reading and writing. I think what

I see education doing is developing a person of curiosity, and not necessarily just teaching facts but teaching people how to learn and acquire knowledge. If you start at the other end and say an educated person is someone who knows where to find out - not necessarily someone who knows all the answers but knows how to find the answers - then if you aim towards that, I guess there is a whole bunch of things that you want to develop, things like patience and understanding, curiosity and all those nice things that go along with the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

I. Your own experience was that this was definitely not occurring with your child?

R. No. I think the whole system tries to do that. I think there are a lot of dedicated people. I think the problem with the regular system is that it can't handle the exceptions, just like any large organization. You go to a small school in a small town like I did - a little girl who couldn't walk, somebody carried her if they had to; the kid that couldn't learn to read very quick, he got a lot of special help from the teacher. But the class size had a lot to do with that. You didn't have as many students. You had teachers who probably worked sixteen hours a day. Dedicated teachers and small class sizes, that is the thing. A totally different environment. I don't think it is the teachers. I think it is the system and the organization that works against some of these things.

If you have a school with several thousand kids and each teacher has so many kids, they only know the parents as "those people who complain or don't complain." I think it has got to be a tough situation for a teacher. You don't follow right through with a child like a small town. I have seen kids make it there who wouldn't have had a prayer in the system that exists here.

But, when the same child and the same teacher have a number of years; if the teacher knew the child, knew the family, knew the environment; it might take four years to accomplish something, but they did it. Whereas here, each teacher gets one child one year.

I. If I was to use the words "impersonal" and "emotional development" or "impersonal versus personal development", is that applying to ...?

R. Yes.

I. There is a little bit different because you are talking about teaching patients, curiosity, those kinds of things which are not necessarily the "emotional". They are a little bit different.

R. Again - within the system - my little girl has got two teachers this year who are doing exactly the same kinds of things with the kids in her classes as Alternative B is doing with my son's class. You see the same kinds of things being developed but unfortunately that is the exception in the other system. That is not the norm. Two out of six years she had had teachers that did that. The other four years she has had a range of good to mediocre in terms of their ability to get the kids to respond.

I. Okay. The things I have been trying to lead to is you see similar things done in the public school system and you mentioned a few of the differences. One of them is the impersonal attitude, the way the huge system seems to function.

R. Yes. It is more the organization than the individuals. The individuals are victims of the organization. You cannot expect anything different when you have that kind of an organization. When you make the decision that you are going to have large schools and bus the kids to them, then you have all the disadvantages of a large organization.

What has happened a lot, in my opinion, we have tried to apply the principles that are very appropriate in the industrial section to the service sector; and I don't think there is a lot of evidence to suggest that "large" means more efficient in the service sector. It is a fundamental mistake that maybe the businessmen that control the purse strings in a lot of these things make and maybe a mistake that educators have made in accepting that.

I. We talked about "jargon". There is a whole thing in one course I identify, a number of industrial terms that are being applied to efficacy and efficiency and behavioral modification; in those words is an attitude of industry. That is the kind of thing you are talking about?

R. What I am saying is that on the industrial side, there is something called the economics of skill. The larger you are established, the more efficiently you can turn out every production. I am saying that probably doesn't apply in the service sector which includes education. I am not convinced the larger a university is, the more efficient it is. Probably if one could gather the information appropriately, you would prove exactly the opposite. The same with hospitals, social service agencies, transportation systems.

I. When you are talking about efficiency, I think there may be two views of efficiency. One of them might be economic efficiency and the other one might be the kind of efficiency you are talking about.

The kind of description I get of that sort of efficiency would be in the case of kids: Are they understanding? Are they being treated humanely? Are they still individuals?

R. Yes. The kind I see Alternative B doing is developing an attachment between the teacher and the class that extends beyond the teacher just doing the job sort-of-thing and getting the class average to a certain level. It is far beyond that and, as I say, I am not an educator. The approach seems to be one where they are not really emphasizing competition, i.e., can student "A" do something student "B" cannot. It is almost each student being encouraged to do the best as compared to what they can do in cut-throat competition which is being used, I think, without too much success in the public school system. What have you accomplished if you are a mediocre person?

I. And you see that happening at Alternative B with your child?

R. Yes, very definitely. I think in the regular system he would have given up. If he had been put in Grade Two in St. Albert, even with the special help - certainly they were trying to give him special help with resource teachers and that sort of thing and keeping him in a regular environment - it would have led to a lot of frustration and probably he would have given up trying to learn.

He is still trying even though he still has difficulty, and I am not sure that Alternative B is the solution and that they are set up to be able to teach a child that has a serious learning disability. I don't know if this is the answer for him but, certainly, I think for any child ... I am very impressed by the approach that is taken even if it turns out there is a more appropriate way for us to help him become educated. If the Alternative B approach didn't work and we had to use another approach, I wouldn't hold that against the Alternative B school.

I. The Alternative B is attempting to do these things but may not be set up for this particular need?

R. Yes, they are trying. I guess children with a problem like our son has often - about age nine - start to get it all together. It starts to fall in place for them. In the meantime - and in Alberta we are fortunate with the significant amounts of money that are being made available to children with learning disabilities and other disabled kinds of children - there might be something that is better than Alternative B established.

I don't think it is fair to expect a teacher that has twenty students to be able to do as much as one who has four or five, no matter what system you use. Certainly I am impressed with the approach, and I think the Alternative B graduates will be different. The average Alternative B graduate will be different from the average graduate of the ordinary system. I think he or she will be a lot more sensitive to other people, have a little different outlook on life, just from the approach that has been used. They don't have to "win" they tell me - not that they don't have to succeed. You can succeed and not necessarily always be "first".

I. If you don't win then you don't succeed?

R. Yes. It is not quite that bad but certainly they use that kind of approach I think.

I. Q 9

R. Yes, at this school. He was not happy at St. Albert. He was getting frustrated but, in fairness to the people at St. Albert, they tried very hard to help. There were individuals, as an example, the teacher in the resource room was working very hard with our son. He was learning from her, but the fact that he didn't fit in - probably they were so busy convincing us it wasn't their fault he was not learning (with some negative effects on the child).

I. Defensive attitude of the school?

R. Yes.

I. I think we have focussed in on your child at Alternative B. We might expand on what things you most value for your child's education in terms of general things - developing patience, understanding and the little things you most value for your child's education, where and how to find answers, more than the basics, teaching survival which means being able to function in a society, developing curiosity and not necessarily just the facts.

R. Probably developing "character", and maybe that is partially what some of these other things are. I guess probably we are not much different than most parents. We want the standard kinds of things people hope would happn as their child goes through the system - not that I see the educational system doing that alone. I think you have to do that in the home as well. I am not saying "here is my child". Why is it in eighteen years we expect them to be a gentleman and a scholar? These things you have to develop as much at home as in the school.

APPENDIX 4: Detailed Questionnaire Analysis.

Desired and Perceived Development of Educational Goals

Unless otherwise indicated, comparisons between schools were made only at the Grades 1 and 2 level as these were the only grades included in the study that both schools had in common. The trends of the 10 educational goals rated in the questionnaire are outlined below in the following order: a.trends in both schools, b.trends in Waldorf/Parkallen, c.trends in Caraway/Garneau, and d.a comparison of trends between schools.

1. CREATIVITY

* In both schools, the alternative parents expressed a greater desire for the schools to develop creativity than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).[7]
* In both schools, the alternative parents perceived that the schools developed creativity to a greater extent than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen parents expressed an increasing desire for creativity from K - 2(see Table 5A).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest discrepancy[8] between desired and developed creativity was expressed by the combined Grades 3 and 4 Garneau(non-alternative) parents(see Table 6A).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the least discrepancy between desired and developed creativity was expressed by the Grades 5 and 6 Caraway(alternative) parents(see Table 6A).
* The Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average desired creativity and a higher average developed creativity than did the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents (see Tables 5A & 6A).
* The Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average desired creativity and a higher average developed creativity than did either the Garneau or Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).

2. ACHIEVEMENT

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Grades 1 and 2 alternative parents perceived that the school developed achievement to a greater extent than did the non-alternative parents(see Table 5A), the reverse was true at the Kindergarten level(see Table 5A).

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[7] "Alternative parents" refers to parents of children in the alternative program; "non-alternative" parents refers to parents in the non-alternative program.

[8] "Discrepancy" refers to the difference between the means of desired ratings and developed ratings.

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the non-alternative Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a greater desire for achievement than did the alternative parents(see Table 5A), the reverse was again true at the Kindergarten level(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the discrepancy between desired and developed achievement was less for the alternative Grades 1 and 2 parents than for the non-alternative parents (see Table 5A); at the Kindergarten level, the discrepancy between desired and developed achievement was greater for the alternative parents than for the non-alternative parents(see Table 5A).
- The Parkallen parents expressed a similar(4.4=0.1) rating for developed achievement for Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 2(see Table 5A).
- The Grades 1 and 2 Waldorf parents expressed a higher rating for developed achievement than did the Waldorf Kindergarten parents(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the alternative parents' average rating for developed achievement was higher than that for the non-alternative parents(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the non-alternative parents expressed a greater average rating for desired achievement in Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 3 and 4 than did the alternative parents; the reverse was true at the Grades 5 and 6 level (see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the total average rating for desired achievement was higher for the non-alternative parents than for the alternative parents(see Table 6A).
- The Garneau parents expressed a decreasing average rating for desired achievement from Grades 1 and 2 to Grades 5 and 6; whereas, the Caraway parents expressed the greatest average rating for desired achievement at the Grades 3 and 4 level(see Table 6A).
- The Garneau parents expressed the greatest average rating for developed achievement at the Grades 5 and 6 level, although they expressed the lowest average rating for desired achievement at the same level(see Table 6A). Their average ratings for both desired and developed achievement were the same.
- The Caraway parents expressed the greatest average ratings for both desired and developed achievement at the Grades 3 and 4 level(see Table 6A).
- The greatest discrepancy between average ratings of desired and developed achievement occurred in Garneau Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 3 and 4, and in Caraway Grades 5 and 6(see Table 6A).
- In both schools, at the Grades 1 and 2 level the non-alternative parents expressed a higher average rating for desired achievement than did the

alternative parents.

* The Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average rating for desired achievement than did the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A). Similarily, the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average rating for desired achievement than did the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* The Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a lower average rating for both desired and developed achievement than did the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* The Garneau and Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed similar average ratings for desired achievement and similar average ratings for developed achievement(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* The discrepancy between desired and developed achievement was greater for non-alternative (Parkallen, Garneau)Grades 1 and 2 parents than for alternative(Waldorf, Caraway)Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* Alternative teachers at both schools rated achievement as the lowest desired educational goal and among the lowest developed educational goals(see Table 7A).

3. SELF-CONCEPT

* In both schools, the alternative parents expressed a greater desire for the schools to develop self-concept than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In both schools, the alternative parents perceived that the schools developed self-concept to a greater extent than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In both schools, a greater discrepancy between average ratings of desired and developed self-concept was expressed by non-alternative parents than by alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In both schools, the alternative parents' average ratings for desired self-concept were about the same(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In both schools, self-concept was the most highly desired educational goal according to alternative parents and alternative teachers. It received a rating of 5.0 at all levels except Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents whose average rating was 4.9(see Tables 5A, 6A and 7A).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the discrepancy between desired and developed self-concept was greater for the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents than for the Kindergarten parents where the average ratings for desired and developed were the same(see Table 5A).

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, both alternative and non-alternative parents expressed lower average ratings for developed self-concept in Kindergarten than in Grades 1 and 2(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed self-concept occurred at the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 level(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents expressed the greatest average ratings for both desired and developed self-concept(see Table 6A & 6B).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 and Grades 5 and 6 parents expressed the greatest average ratings for desired self-concept; the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 5 and 6 parents expressed the greatest average ratings for developed self-concept(see Table 6A & 6B).

4. POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD LEARNING

- In both schools, the alternative program parents expressed higher average ratings for developed positive attitude toward learning(p.a.t.l.) than the non-alternative program parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In both schools, the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed p.a.t.l. was expressed by the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In both schools, the discrepancy between desired and developed p.a.t.l. was about the same for the non-alternative parents (except for the Parkallen Kindergarten parents where the discrepancy is less), although both the desired and developed average ratings were higher at Parkallen than at Garneau(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In both schools, p.a.t.l. was among the most desired educational goal according to non-alternative parents and teachers(see Tables 5A, 6A & 7A); although it was not consistently considered the best developed.
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents rated their desire for p.a.t.l. as 5.0. Positive attitude toward learning and achievement were the only educational goals for which the non-alternative parents expressed a higher average rating for desire than did the alternative parents(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the discrepancy between desired and developed p.a.t.l. increased from K - 2(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the discrepancy between desired and developed p.a.t.l. was less for alternative parents than for non-alternative parents(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, both alternative and non-alternative Grade 1 parents rated developed

p.a.t.l. higher than did parents at other levels(see Table 5A).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed p.a.t.l. was expressed by Parkallen Grade 2 parents (see Table 5A).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed p.a.t.l. was expressed by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents and by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Table 6A).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway parents at all levels rated desired p.a.t.l. as 5.0(see Table 6A).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau parents expressed the greatest average rating for desired p.a.t.l. at the Grades 3 and 4 level, and the greatest average rating of developed p.a.t.l. at the Grades 5 and 6 level(see Table 6A).
* Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed higher average ratings for both desired and developed p.a.t.l. than did Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average rating for desired p.a.t.l. than did Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents; the reverse is true for developed p.a.t.l.(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the non-alternative parents expressed a higher average rating for desired p.a.t.l. than did the alternative parents; whereas, in the Caraway-Garneau study, the alternative parents expressed a higher average rating for desired p.a.t.l than did the non-alternative parents(Tables 5A & 6A).

5. CURIOSITY

* In both schools, the alternative parents expressed a higher average rating for desired curiosity and a higher average rating for developed curiosity than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
* In both schools, the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed curiosity occurred in the regular programs except for Waldorf-Parkallen Kindergarten(see Table 5A & 6A).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf parents expressed an increasing desire for curiosity from K - 2(see Table 5A).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen parents expressed an increase in developed curiosity from K - 2(see Table 5A).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf Grade 1 parents expressed a lower desire for curiosity than did the Waldorf Grade 2 parents, but they expressed a higher average rating for developed curiosity(see Table 5A).

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the lowest desired and developed ratings for curiosity were expressed by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents, and by the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents; the highest desired and developed ratings were expressed by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents and by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau parents expressed similar desire at all grade levels; however, the grades 5 and 6 parents expressed a higher average rating for developed curiosity(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway parents expressed decreasing average ratings for desired and developed curiosity from Grades 1 and 2 to Grades 5 and 6(see Table 6A).
- The Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average rating for desired curiosity and a lower average rating for developed curiosity than did the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- The Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents and the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a similar average rating for desired curiosity; the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a lower average rating for developed curiosity than did the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- The administrators of both schools expressed the greatest discrepancy between the desired and developed ratings for curiosity (and independence)(see Table 7A).

6. SELF-DETERMINATION

- In both schools, the alternative parents expressed higher average ratings for both desired and developed self-determination than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In both schools, the discrepancy between desired and developed average ratings was greater in the non-alternative programs than in the alternative programs(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, both the alternative and non-alternative parents expressed an increasing rating for desired self-determination from K - 2(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, both the alternative and non-alternative parents expressed the greatest average rating for developed self-determination at the Grade 1 level(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Grades 5 and 6 parents expressed the greatest average rating for developed self-determination in the non-alternative program, but the lowest average rating for developed self-determination in the alternative program(see Table 6A).

- * The greatest discrepancy between desired and developed was expressed by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents and the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents; whereas, the lowest discrepancy between desired and developed was expressed by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents and by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Table 6A).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest average ratings for desired self-determination were expressed by the Caraway grades 3 and 4 parents; the Garneau parents expressed a similar average rating for desired self-determination at all Grade levels. The highest average ratings for developed self-determination were expressed by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents and by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Table 6A).
- * The Garneau Grades 1 and 2 responses closely resemble those from Parkallen Grade 2, as do those from Caraway and Waldorf Grades 1 and 2(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- * The Parkallen and Waldorf Grade 1 parents both expressed higher average ratings for developed self-determination than the Parkallen and Waldorf Grade 2 parents or the Garneau and Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).

7. INDEPENDENCE

- * In both schools, the alternative parents expressed higher average ratings for desired and developed independence than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- * In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the greatest average ratings for developed independence were expressed by the Grade 1 parents in the alternative program and by the Grade 2 parents in the non-alternative program(see Table 5A).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed the lowest average ratings for desired and developed independence(see Table 6A).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents and the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents expressed the highest average ratings for desired independence and the Garneau and Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents expressed the highest average ratings for developed independence(see Table 6A).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed was expressed by the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 3 and 4 parents(see Table 6A).
- * Although the average ratings for desired independence expressed by Garneau parents were about the same for all grade levels, the average rating for developed independence was higher for the Grades 5 and 6 parents than for the others(see Table 6A).

- The discrepancy between desired and developed was greater for the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents than for the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents; although the average ratings for desired independence were about the same for both sets of parents, the average rating for developed independence was higher for the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents than for Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Table 5A & 6A).
- The discrepancy between desired and developed was greater for the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents than for the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents; the average rating for desired independence was lower and the average rating for developed independence was higher for the Waldorf parents than for the Caraway parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In both schools, the alternative teachers rated independence among the lowest developed educational goals(see Table 7A).
- In both schools, the administrators expressed the greatest discrepancy between desired and developed ratings for independence (and curiosity)(see Table 7A).

8. FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY

- In both schools, the alternative parents expressed higher average ratings for both desired and developed freedom from anxiety than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, there was no discrepancy between the average ratings for desired and developed expressed by the Waldorf Grade 1 parents(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the average ratings for both desired and developed freedom from anxiety were higher for the Waldorf parents than for the Parkallen parents at each grade level (see Table 5A).
- The lowest average rating recorded for the 10 educational goals was expressed by the Parkallen Kindergarten parents in response to the extent to which the school developed freedom from anxiety(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, there was an increase in the average ratings for developed freedom from anxiety expressed by Parkallen parents from K - 2(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the discrepancy between desired and developed was higher for the Garneau parents than for the Caraway parents at all grade levels(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest average ratings for desired freedom from anxiety were expressed by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents and by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Table 6A); the greatest average ratings for developed freedom

from anxiety were expressed by the Garneau and Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents(see Table 6A).

- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the lowest average ratings for desired freedom from anxiety were expressed by the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents and Grades 3 and 4 parents; the lowest average ratings for developed freedom from anxiety were expressed by the Garneau and Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents(see Table 6A).
- The Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average rating for desired freedom from anxiety than the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A); similarily, the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a higher average rating for desired freedom from anxiety than did the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).

9. COOPERATION

- In both schools, the alternative parents expressed higher average ratings for both desired and developed cooperation than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A), except in Waldorf-Parkallen where the Parkallen and Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed similar average ratings for desired cooperation.
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf and Parkallen parents expressed an increasing rating for developed cooperation from K - 2(see Table 5A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf and Parkallen Grade 2 parents expressed similar average ratings for desired cooperation and similar average ratings for developed cooperation(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the discrepancy between desired and developed is greater for the non-alternative parents than for the alternative parents at all levels(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the greatest average ratings for desired cooperation were expressed by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents and by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents; the greatest average ratings for developed cooperation were expressed by the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents and by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the lowest average ratings for desired cooperation were expressed by the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents and by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents; the lowest average ratings for developed cooperation were expressed by the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents and by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents(see Table 6A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the alternative parents expressed a decreasing desire for cooperation from Grades 1 - 6(see Table 6A).
- The Waldorf and Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed less discrepancy between their ratings for

desired and developed cooperation than did the Caraway and Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).

- The Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed lower average ratings for desired and developed cooperation than did the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).

10. SELF-GROWTH

- In both schools, the alternative parents expressed higher average ratings for both desired and developed self-growth than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Kindergarten parents expressed a higher average rating for developed self-growth than for desired self-growth(see Table 5A). This is the only instance where an educational goal is rated higher for development than for desire.
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Grade 1 parents expressed the greatest discrepancy between their average ratings for desired and developed self-growth(see Table 5A).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau parents expressed a greater discrepancy between their ratings for desired and developed than did the Caraway parents at all grade levels.
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau parents expressed similar average ratings for desired self-growth; the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents expressed the highest average rating for desired self-growth. The lowest average ratings for developed self growth were expressed by the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents and by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- The discrepancy between desired and developed self-growth is greater for Garneau Grades 1 and 2 than for Parkallen Grades 1 and 2; and similar for Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 and for Caraway Grades 1 and 2(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- The Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed a lower average rating for developed self-growth than did the Parkallen parents(see Tables 5A & 6A).
- The Waldorf and Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents expressed similar avarage ratings for desired and developed self-growth(see Tables 5A & 6A).

Average Ratings of School Characteristics

Parents and educators were asked to rate their schools in each of the following areas. Their response trends are outlined in the following order:a.trends common to both schools, b.trends in Waldorf/ Parkallen, c.trends in Caraway/Garneau and d.comparisons of trends between schools.

1. QUALIFIED TEACHERS

During the interviews most parents described the teacher as the single most important factor in their child's education.

- In both schools, the average alternative parent rating was higher than the average non-alternative parent rating at the same level(see Tables 8 & 9).
- In both schools, qualified teachers and quality of teaching were among the most highly rated school characteristics by both alternative and non-alternative parents(see Tables 8 & 9).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the lowest average rating for qualified teachers was expressed by the non-alternative Grade 1 parents and the highest average rating for qualified teachers was expressed by the non-alternaative Grade 1 Parents and alternative Kindergarten parents. (see Table 8).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents rated qualified teachers the lowest; the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents rated qualified teachers the highest(see Table 9).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway parents consistently rated qualified teachers highly(4.5)(see Table 9).
- Although the alternative parents at both schools rated qualified teachers the same, the Garneau parents' average rating was lower than that of the Parkallen parents(see Tables 8 & 9).
- The average Waldorf teacher rating was lower for qualified teachers than the average Parkallen teacher rating(see Table 8).
- The Waldorf and Parkallen teacher ratings were lower than the corresponding average parent ratings(see Table 8).
- The Waldorf teachers and the Waldorf-Parkallen principal rated qualified teachers among the lowest characteristics; whereas, the alternative parents rated qualified teachers among the highest(see Table 8).
- The Garneau educators rated qualified teachers higher on the average than did the Parkallen educators(see Tables 8 & 9).

2. QUALITY OF TEACHING

- In both schools, the alternative parent average rating was higher than that of the non-alternative parents(see Tables 8 & 9).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf Grade 1 parents rated quality of teaching the highest characteristic of their school; the Parkallen Grade 1 parents rated quality of teaching among the lowest(see Table 8). In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents rated quality of teaching the highest characteristic of their school.
- Although the average rating for quality of teaching was about the same for both Waldorf and Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents, the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents rated quality of teaching lower than did the

Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 8 & 9).

* The Waldorf average teacher rating was lower than the Parkallen average teacher rating for quality of teaching(see Table 8).
* The Waldorf and Parkallen teacher ratings were both lower than the corresponding parents' ratings for quality of teaching(see Table 8).
* The Caraway Grades 1 and 2 teacher and the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 teacher both rated quality of teaching higher than did the corresponding parent groups(see Table 9).
* The Caraway Grades 3 and 4 teacher rated quality of teaching lower than did the corresponding parent group(see Table 9).
* The principals of both schools rated quality of teaching the same(see Tables 8 & 9); the Caraway teachers average rating for quality of teaching was higher than that of the Waldorf teachers(see Tables 8 & 9).
* The Parkallen principal and the Waldorf teachers rated quality of teaching lower than did the Waldorf parents; the Garneau principal rated quality of teaching lower than did either the Caraway parents or the Caraway teachers(see Tables 8 & 9).

3. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

* In both schools, the alternative parent average rating for academic standards was higher than the non-alternative parent average rating(see Tables 8 & 9).
* In both schools, the alternative teacher average rating was lower than the alternative parent average rating for academic standards(see Tables 8 & 9).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf Kindergarten parents and the Parkallen Grade 1 parents rated academic standards lower than did the other Waldorf and Parkallen parent groups(see Table 8).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Kindergarten and Grade 2 parents rated academic standards above average(4.5)(see Table 8).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf parents' average rating for academic standards increased from K - 2(see Table 8).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf parents' average rating for academic standards was similar to the the Parkallen parents' average rating(3.8)(see Table 8).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents rated academic standards lower than did the other Garneau parent groups; the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents rated academic standards lower than did the other Caraway parent groups(see Table 9).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 5

and 6 parents rated academic standards higher than did the other Garneau parent groups(see Table 9).

* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 and Grades 5 and 6 parents' average rating for academic standards was the same(4.0)(see Table 9).
* The alternative teachers at both schools and the Parkallen principal rated academic standards the same(3.0); the Garneau principal rated academic standards higher(4)(see Tables 8 & 9).
* The Waldorf teachers rated academic standards lower than did the Parkallen teachers(see Table 8).
* In both schools, the non-alternative parents rated academic standards higher than did the non-alternative teachers and the alternative parents rated academic standards higher than did the alternative teachers except the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents who rated academic standards the same as the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 teacher(see Tables 8 & 9).

4. SPECIAL PROGRAMS (ENRICHMENT AND OPTIONS)

* In both schools, the alternative parents rated special programs higher than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 8 & 9).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Kindergarten parents rated special programs among the lowest characteristics of their school(see Table 8).
* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf parent average ratings for special programs increased from K -2(see Table 8).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents rated special programs among the lowest characteristics of their school(see Table 9).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents rated special programs among the highest characteristics of their school(see Table 9).
* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway parents average ratings increased from Grades 1 - 6(see Table 9).
* The Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents' average rating for special programs was similar(3.4=0.2)to the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents average rating(see Tables 8 & 9); however, the Waldorf Grades 1 and 2 parents average rating was higher than the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents average rating for special programs(see Tables 8 & 9).
* The Waldorf teacher rating for special programs was higher than the Parkallen teacher rating(see Table 8).
* The Waldorf parents and the Waldorf teachers rated special programs about the same(see Table 8).
* The Parkallen parents rated special programs lower than did the Parkallen teachers(see Table 8).

* The Caraway parents rated special programs higher than did the Caraway teachers except at the Grades 5 and 6 level where the ratings were the same(4.0) for both teachers and parents(see Table 9).

5. LEVEL OF DISCIPLINE

* In both schools, the alternative parent average rating for level of discipline was higher than the non-alternative parent average rating(see Tables 8 & 9).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf Grade 1 parents average rating for level of discipline was 4.2 and higher than other Waldorf and Parkallen parent ratings for level of discipline(see Table 8).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen parent ratings for level of discipline increased from K -2(see Table 8).

* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents average rating for level of discipline was 4.3 and higher than other Caraway and Garneau parent ratings for level of discipline(see Table 9).

* The Waldorf and Caraway average teacher ratings for level of discipline were lower than those of the Waldorf and Caraway average parent ratings(see Tables 8 & 9).

* The Garneau principal, the Caraway parents and the Caraway teachers rated level of discipline about the same(4.0); whereas, the Parkallen principal rated level of discipline lower than did either the Waldorf parents or the Waldorf teachers(see Tables 8 & 9).

* The Waldorf teachers rated level of discipline lower than did the Parkallen teachers(see Table 8).

* The Parkallen teachers rated level of discipline higher than did the Parkallen parents(see Table 8).

* The Waldorf teachers rated level of discipline lower than did the Waldorf parents(see Table 8).

6. CLASS SIZE

For actual class size figures see '# sent' for each Grade in Tables 1, 2, 3 & 4.

* In both schools, the alternative parent average rating was higher than the non-alternative parent average rating for class size; however, the difference between the Waldorf and Parkallen parent average ratings was less than the difference between the Caraway and Garneau parent average ratings(see Table 10).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, both the Waldorf and Parkallen parents average ratings for class size increased from K -2(see Table 8).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf Kindergarten parents rated class size lower than did other Waldorf or Parkallen parent groups(see Table 8).

* The Garneau parents' average rating for class size

was similar to the Garneau teachers average rating; likewise, the Parkallen parents average rating for class size was similar to the Parkallen teachers average rating(see Tables 8 & 9).

- The Garneau principal rated class size among the highest(4) characteristics of his school; whereas, the Parkallen principal class size among the lowest(2) characteristics(see Tables 8 & 9).
- The Waldorf teachers average rating for class size was lower than the Parkallen teachers average rating; similarily, the Waldorf parents average rating for class size was lower than the Parkallen parents average rating(see Table 8).
- In both Waldorf and Parkallen, the teachers average rating for class size was lower than was the parents' average rating(see Table 8).
- The Caraway teachers average rating for class size increased from Grade 1 - 6(see Table 9).

7. PROXIMITY TO HOME

Average results for 'proximity to home' may not be meaningful since parents far from the school might indicate this with low ratings(1 or 2); whereas parents close to the school might indicate this with higher ratings(4 or 5). An average of such results would not indicate the discrepancy between them.

- In both schools, more of the alternative parents indicated a lower rating for proximity to home than indicated a higher rating.
- In both schools, more of the non-alternative parents indicated a higher rating for proximity to home than indicated a lower rating.
- In both schools, it would appear from the above results that most children in the non-alternative programs are attending the neighbourhood school; whereas, children in the alternative programs are coming from all over the city. This trend was, in fact, borne out by school records.
- The difference between Waldorf and Parkallen responses to this question was greater than the difference between Caraway and Garneau results(see Tables 8 & 9).
- The principals and alternative teachers at both schools rated proximity to home as below average(2)(see Tables 8 & 9).
- The Caraway-Garneau parents and educators rated proximity to home and condition of school building among the lowest characteristics of their school(see Table 9).

8. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the non-alternative parents' average rating for communication between home and school increased from K - 2(see Table 8).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf Grade 1 parents' average rating for communication between

home and school was higher than those of other Waldorf and Parkallen parents; the Waldorf Grade 2 parents rated communication between home and school lower than did other Waldorf and Parkallen parents(see Table 8).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Grade 2 parents rated communication between home and school among the highest characteristics of their school(see Table 8).

* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau parents' average rating for communication between home and school increased from Grade 1 - 6; whereas, the Caraway parents' average rating decreased from Grade 1 - 6(see Table 9).

* In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway parents' average rating for communication between home and school was higher than that of the Garneau parents(see Table 9).

* The Waldorf teachers average rating for communication between home and school was higher than that of the Waldorf parents; however, the Caraway teachers average rating was lower than that of the Caraway parents(see Tables 8 & 9).

* The Parkallen principal rated communication between home and school among the highest characteristics of her school, the Garneau principal rated it among the lowest characteristics of his school(see Tables 8 & 9).

* In both schools, the alternative teachers average rating for communication between home and school was higher than the non-alternative teachers average rating(see Tables 8 & 9).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen parents' average rating for communication between home and school was higher than the Parkallen teachers average rating(see Table 8).

* The Garneau principal rated communication between home and school lower than did Caraway and Garneau parents and teachers(see Table 9).

9. AMOUNT OF ATTENTION GIVEN TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS

* In both schools, the alternative parent average ratings were higher than the non-alternative parent average ratings(see Table 8 & 9). All of the alternative parent average ratings were in the 4-5 range(above average).

* In both schools, the Grades 1 and 2 parents rated the amount of attention given to individual students higher than did parents at other levels(see Tables 8 & 9).

* In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, in spite of a larger class size(n=17), the Waldorf Kindergarten parents rated individual attention higher than did the Parkallen Kindergarten parents(class size=10)(see Table 8).

- * In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen and Waldorf Kindergarten parents rated individual attention lower than did other Waldorf or Parkallen parent groups(see Table 8).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Garneau parents' average rating for individual attention decreased from Grade 1 - 6(see Table 9).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, in spite of similar class sizes, the Caraway parents rated individual attention higher than did the Garneau parents(see Table 9).
- * The Waldorf and Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents' average ratings for individual attention were similar, but the Parkallen Grades 1 and 2 parents average rating for individual attention was higher than that of the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents(see Tables 8 & 9).
- * In both schools, the alternative teachers average rating for individual attention was lower than that of the alternative parents(see Tables 8 & 9).
- * Both principals rated individual attention above average(4). This was higher than the average rating of the non-alternative parents but lower than the average rating of the alternative parents at each school(see Tables 8 & 9).
- * In both schools, the non-alternative teachers rated individual attention higher than did the non-alternative parents(see Tables 8 & 9).

10. ADMINISTRATION

- * In both schools, the principals rated the administration of their schools as average(3).
- * In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen Kindergarten parents' average rating for administration was 2.7;whereas, the other Parkallen parents and the Waldorf parents' average ratings ranged from average to excellent(3-5)(see Table 8).
- * In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen parents' average ratings for administration increased from K -2(see Table 8).
- * In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Parkallen parents' average rating for administration and the Waldorf parents' average rating were about the same(3.8)(see Table 8).
- * In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway parents rated administration lower than did the Garneau parents(see Table 9).
- * The Caraway teachers rated the administration of their school above average(see Table 9).
- * In both schools the alternative teachers rated the administration higher than did the non-alternative teachers(see Tables 8 & 9).

11. CONDITION OF SCHOOL BUILDING/EQUIPMENT/FACILITIES

- * In both schools, condition of school building/equipment/facilities was among the lowest rated characteristics by parents and educators(see Tables 8 & 9).

- The average ratings at Garneau were lower than the average ratings at Parkallen. This is in keeping with the fact that Garneau is a much older building than Parkallen(see Tables 8 & 9).
- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the parent average ratings ranged from 2.6(Waldorf, Grade 2) to 3.8(Parkallen, Grade 1)(see Table 8).
- In both schools, the alternative parents' average ratings were lower than the non-alternative parents' average ratings for school building/equipment/facilities(see Tables 8 & 9).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Grades 5 and 6 parents in both the alternatve and non-alternative programs rated this characteristic higher than did parents at other levels(see Table 9).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the Caraway Grade 1 and 2 teacher and the principal rated condition of the school building/equipment/ facilities as poor(1)(see Table 9).

12. CRIME/VANDALISM

A rating of 5 could indicate that the respondent thought that crime/vandalism was very high or that he thought that crime/vandalism was 'excellent' in the school and presumably, low.

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the Waldorf parents' average rating for crime/vandalism were higher than the Parkallen parents' average ratings(see Table 8).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the parent and teacher ratings were in the 2 - 3 range, except for the principal and Caraway Grades 5 and 6 teacher both of whom rated crime/vandalism 5(see Table 9).

13. OTHER

- In the Waldorf-Parkallen study, the following items were mentioned and rated: dedication of teachers(5), parent participation(1), student attitude toward teachers(4), student attitude toward school(4), student potential for complete expression(5).
- In the Caraway-Garneau study, the following items were mentioned and rated:teacher commitment(5), cleanliness of rooms(1), close proximity to day-care(5).

Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the Edmonton Public Schools

(See Tables 12, 13, 14, 15 & 16).

WALDORF-PARKALLEN RESULTS

Strengths

- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Waldorf Kindergarten parents were: academic standards(3),' facilities and

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' The bracketted figures refer to the number of times the characteristic was mentioned.

equipment(2), and emphasis on "the basics"(2).

* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Parkallen Kindergarten parents were: qualified teachers(2), academic standards(2), facilities and equipment(2), and relations and communication between home and school(2).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Waldorf Grade 1 parents were: teacher commitment(2), financial support(2), and facilities and equipment(2).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Parkallen Grade 1 parents were: qualified teachers(2), academic standards(2), facilities and equipment(2), school management and administration(2), and emphasis on "the basics"(2).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Waldorf Grade 2 parents were: facilities and equipment(4), school management and administration(3), qualified teachers(2), financial support(2), and relations and communication between home and school(2).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Parkallen Grade 2 parents were: qualified teachers(3), teacher commitment(3), discipline tactics(3), academic standards(2), and relations and communication between home and school(2).

Weaknesses

* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Waldorf Kindergarten parents were: discipline tactics(3), development of student's self-worth(3), amount of attention given to individual students(2).
* The characteristic most frequently mentioned as a weakness by the Parkallen Kindergarten parents was: enrichment and option programs(3).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Waldorf Grade 1 parents were: development of student's self-worth(4) and amount of attention given to individual students(4).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Parkallen Grade 1 parents were: discipline tactics(3), amount of attention given to individual students(3), and relations and communication between home and school(2).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Waldorf Grade 2 parents were: amount of attention given to individual students(6), development of student's self-worth(5), facilities and equipment(2), and discipline tactics(2).

- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Parkallen Grade 2 parents were: facilities and equipment(3), academic standards(2), emphasis on "the basics"(2), and enrichment and option programs(2).

CARAWAY-GARNEAU RESULTS

Stengths

- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents were: facilities and equipment(5), financial support(4), and qualified teachers(3).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents were: qualified teachers(7), teacher commitment(5), and development of student's self-worth(4).
- The charactersitics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents were: facilities and equipment(7), school management and administration(5), and emphasis on "the basics"(4).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents were: qualified teachers(8), academic standards(6), and teacher commitment(5).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as strengths by the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents were: facilities and equipment(3) and school management and administration(2).
- The characteristic most frequently mentioned as a strength by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents was: academic standards(3).

Weaknesses

- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Caraway Grades 1 and 2 parents were: amount of attention given to individual students(6), development of student's self-worth(5), and enrichment and option programs(3).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Garneau Grades 1 and 2 parents were: amount of attention given to individual students(6), relations and communication between home and school(5), financial support(4), and enrichment and option programs(4).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Caraway Grades 3 and 4 parents were: amount of attention given to individual students(7), and development of student's self-worth(6).
- The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Garneau Grades 3 and 4 parents were: discipline tactics(4), financial support(4), relations and communication between

home and school(4), community involvement in school activities(4), emphasis on "the basics"(4), and development of student's self-worth(4).

* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Caraway Grades 5 and 6 parents were: discipline tactics(3), amount of attention given to individual students(3), and development of student's self-worth(2).
* The characteristics most frequently mentioned as weaknesses by the Garneau Grades 5 and 6 parents were: facilities and equipment(3), community involvement in school activities(3), and emphasis on "the basics"(3).

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